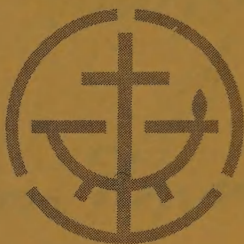


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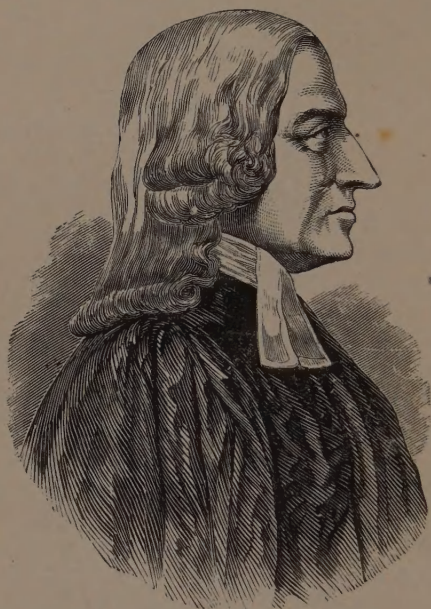
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John Wesley, the Founder of Methodism.

Frontispiece.

A

HISTORY OF METHODISM.

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FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

By

WILLIAM W. BENNETT, D. D.

CINCINNATI:
JENNINGS AND PYE.
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A HISTORY OF METHODISM.

FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN WESLEY, from whose labors as a preacher of the Gospel sprung that large body of Christian people called Methodists, was born June 17, 1703. The town of Epworth, in Lincoln county, England, about one hundred and ten miles northwest from the great city of London, was his birthplace. It was not much more than a large village—about two thousand people lived there, and most of them made their living by raising flax and hemp and weaving them into cloth.

Samuel Wesley, the father of John, came to Epworth about the year 1695, and was the preacher of the Church of England among the poor people there for nearly forty years. The mother of John Wesley, whose name was Susannah, was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, a very learned man and a pious minister of the gospel. He was remarkable for his love of the Bible when very young, and it is said that when he was only six years old he read twenty chapters a day.

John Wesley's father, grandfather, great-grandfather,

and his grandfather on his mother's side, were all preachers. Susannah Annesley was married to Samuel Wesley when she was twenty years old. She was very beautiful, and had a fine mind well-stored with learning. She read Latin and Greek with ease, and was well versed in the branches of a liberal education. In theological studies she took much delight, and even read with interest the knotty questions of religious controversy. She was a woman of great firmness of character, pious, patient, methodical, and energetic. She taught her children herself until they were old enough to be put out to school.

The family at Epworth parsonage was large. There were nineteen children, but nine of them died in infancy. Those that lived were Samuel, John, Charles, Emilia, Susannah, Mary, Mehetabel, Anne, Martha, and Keziah. This large family had to struggle with poverty, but they managed to live with tolerable comfort, and the children were well trained by their godly parents. Samuel, the oldest son, was a very backward child in learning to talk. It is said that he was not able to speak until he was five years old, and his parents feared that he would always be dumb. But one day his mother had not seen him for some time, and called out very earnestly, "Where is Samuel?" Sammy, who had hid himself away with a favorite kitten he was playing with, came out of his hiding-place with the kitten in his arms, and said, "Here am I, mother." After this he spoke plainly. His mother at once began to teach him, and in six hours he learned the entire alphabet. She then set him to read the first chapter of Genesis. He had a wonderful memory, and his mother said she never had to tell him the same thing twice.

Mrs. Wesley was peculiar in the management of her

children. When they were one year old, they were taught to fear the rod; and if they cried at all, it must be in soft and subdued tones. One of her rules, and a good one too, we think, was, never to give a child anything it cried for; she said, if it is paid for crying, it will cry again. The children were limited to three meals a day, and were not allowed to eat between meals. They were put to bed at 8 o'clock, and a servant was never permitted to sit by a child till it fell asleep. As soon as the children could speak, they were taught the Lord's Prayer, and they were required to repeat it every night and morning. They were never allowed to be rude to each other or to other persons, and on no account were they to fail to call each other brother or sister, as the case might be.

Mrs. Wesley kept her children in school six hours—which, if we may presume to say so, we think much too long for young children—nor without permission, were they to talk loud, play, or run in the yard, garden, or street. At five years old they were taught to read; and they were allowed only one day in which to learn their letters; and all of them did learn them in one day except Mary and Anne, who were a day and a half at the task. They sung Psalms every morning when school was opened, and every evening when the day's work was done. Of course they had a happy family at Epworth, and they all loved one another a great deal.

A terrible accident happened when John Wesley was six years old. The parsonage house, which was a very poor one at best, built of timber and mud and the roof covered, or thatched, as they call it in England, with straw, took fire one night and the family came near being burned up in it. When the fire broke out John, Charles, (who was an infant,) and three of their sisters

with the nurse, were all sleeping in the same room. The nurse woke up, and taking the baby Charles in her arms, rushed out and told the children to follow; the three sisters did so and got out, but John did not wake up. When they all got out into the yard Mr. Wesley counted his children and found that John was not with them. At that moment they heard a cry, and the father tried to rush into the burning house, but the flames drove him back. Looking up, the people saw little John at the window. He had been waked up by the fire burning above him in the room, and had run to the window and climbed up on a chest. One man said, "Run for a ladder!" Another, more thoughtful, said, "No, we have no time to get a ladder, let me stand under the window, and let a tall man stand on my shoulders, and he can reach the child." It was done in a moment, and the boy was taken out just as the roof fell in.

When he found all his children safe, Mr. Wesley said, "Come, neighbors, let us kneel down and give thanks to God. I have all my children, and I am rich enough."

His mother thought deeply about the narrow escape of her son from such an awful death, and seemed to feel that God had saved him to do a special work. In one of her evening meditations upon the goodness of God, she said: "I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child, that Thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavor to instill into his mind the principles of true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success." John in after life gratefully remembered his escape, and on one of his portraits had a burning house engraved with the motto, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

John Wesley, from his early childhood, showed a sober and studious disposition. He thought he ought to answer to his reason and his conscience for everything he did. When asked if he would have a piece of bread or some fruit, he would answer, "I thank you, I will think about it." It seemed to be natural to him to reason about everything. He carried this so far that his father one day gave him a mild rebuke, saying, "Child, you think to carry everything by dint of argument; but you will find how little is ever done in the world by close reasoning." The good old rector said to his wife one day in a pet about this disposition of "Jack," as he was called in the family: "I profess, sweetheart, I think our Jack would not attend to the most pressing necessity of nature unless he could give a reason for it." But with all this demand for reasons there was a sincere spirit of devotion in the boy, and such was the consistency of his conduct that his father admitted him to the Holy Communion when only eight years old. When John was about nine years old he had the small-pox, and he bore this terrible disease with a patience and fortitude that would shame many grown-up Christians. His father was away from home at the time, and his mother, who nursed him, wrote to her husband, "Jack has borne his disease bravely like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without complaint."

When he was eleven he left his humble home at Epworth, and, by the favor of the Duke of Buckingham, entered at the Charterhouse, a famous school in the city of London. He had a hard time among the bad boys at this school. The older and stronger boys would often take from the younger and weaker ones the meat that was allowed with their bread; they served little Jack in this way, so that for a large part of the five years that

he staid there the only solid food he had was bread. But he kept his health by doing every day what his father had told him to do when he left home—this was to run round the garden three times every morning. Though he was often insulted and mistreated by the big, rough boys of the school, he was very patient, obeyed all the rules, studied very hard, and took a high position among the best scholars. In this public school he did not have the examples and counsels that he had had at his home, and he did not continue to be as good a boy as he had been. He says, outward restraints being removed, he was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and was almost constantly guilty of outward sins, which he knew to be such, though they were not thought to be very great sins in the eyes of the world. But he still read his Bible and said his prayers morning and evening. He said he hoped to be saved by not being quite as bad as other people, by having a kindly feeling for religion, by reading the Bible, saying his prayers, and going to church. But he found out afterward that it takes a great deal more than this to make a person a true Christian.

At seventeen, John Wesley left the Charterhouse school and entered as a student at Christ Church College, in the University of Oxford. Both as a school boy and a college student, his life was a hard one for several years. When he was an old man, in thinking over his boyish days, he said: "How marvellous are the ways of God! How has he kept me even from a child! From ten to thirteen or fourteen, I had little but bread to eat, and not great plenty of even that. I believe this was so far from hurting me, that it laid the foundation of lasting health."

His father at Epworth had to fight hard with poverty,

and so had he to do at Oxford. He did not seem to know much of the value of money, and spent what little he could get too freely, which often brought him into trouble. He used to write to his mother very often and tell her of his trials; she always helped him as far as she could, and wrote him very encouraging letters. In one of these she said: "Dear Jack, be not discouraged; do your duty; keep close to your studies, and hope for better days. Perhaps we shall pick up a few crumbs for you before the end of the year." Such words from his noble mother kept his spirits up, and he worked on harder than ever. He said in a letter to his mother about his manner of living at college: "We are most of us now very healthy at Oxford; fruit is so very cheap that apples may be had almost for fetching; and other things are both plentiful and good." He says they had plenty of rogues about the college, and tells of a gentleman who had his cap and wig snatched off his head by a rogue as he stood at the door; he ran after the thief, but could not catch him. Jack said to his mother in the same letter: "I am pretty safe from such gentlemen; for unless they carried me away, carcass and all, they would have but a poor purchase."

All the Wesley children were of a gay, lively, witty turn of mind, and enjoyed life very much. Charles was a gay young man at college, and so was John to a certain extent; but he was at times very serious, and though he says he indulged in many known sins, he tried to keep up a fair moral character. He was human and frail, like all men, and found cause to repent deeply before he became an earnest and happy Christian. Any incident that had religious point in it made a deep impression on his mind. Late one evening the porter of his College, a poor but pious man, came to his room and

said he wished to talk with him. Wesley told him, after a little pleasantry, to go home and get another coat. The porter replied, "This is the only coat I have got in the world, and I thank God for it." Wesley said, "Go home and get your supper." The man replied, "I have had nothing to eat to-day, but a drink of water, and I thank God for that." Wesley said, "It is late, and you will be locked out, and then what will you have to thank God for?" "I will thank Him," replied the porter, "that I have the dry stones to lie upon," "John," said Wesley, "you thank God when you have nothing to wear, nothing to eat, and no bed to lie upon. What else do you thank Him for?" "I thank Him," returned the poor fellow, "that He has given me life and being; and a heart to love Him, and a desire to serve Him." This conversation made a deep impression on the mind of the young student, and convinced him that there was something in religion to which he was a stranger.

For five years Wesley studied hard and maintained his reputation as a fine scholar. He amused himself occasionally with writing verses. One of his poems was addressed to a young lady whom he called Cloe; it was such an effusion as a smart young fellow, full of life, might be expected to produce.

Wesley's health was not very good while he was at Oxford. He was often troubled with bleeding at the nose. Once while he was walking in the country he bled so much that he was almost choked, and to stop the bleeding he had to strip off his clothes and leap into the river.

When Wesley went to Oxford he had not made up his mind to become a preacher of the gospel; he was at first more inclined to become a teacher, and he was at college more than four years before he thought seriously

of entering the ministry. His good father cautioned him against improper motives, and told him he must not become a minister "as Eli's sons did, to eat a piece of bread, but for the glory of God and the good of men." He began when about twenty-two to study divinity in earnest. God, he said, directed him to a book called "Kempis' Christian's Pattern," and he saw that true religion is seated in the heart, and that God's law reaches to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. He met with a religious friend about this time, and he began to change the whole form of his conversation and to set out in earnest upon a new life. An hour or two every day he set apart for private prayer and meditation. He watched against all sin in word and deed.

He began to aim at and pray for inward holiness, and he says, "Now doing so much and living so good a life, I doubted not that I was a good Christian."

Another book fell into his hands, which deeply impressed his heart; this was called "Holy Living and Dying," and was written by Jeremy Taylor, a pious and eloquent preacher of the Church of England. These were the first books Wesley read on practical divinity, and he held them in very high esteem as long as he lived. He now began to record the events and exercises of his every day life, and thus grew up that marvellous book called Wesley's Journals. Wesley's life was now wholly changed. He determined to give all his life to God, but even this, he said he saw would profit him nothing unless he gave his heart, yea, all his heart to Him. Here was the turning-point in Wesley's life. From this time he never rested until he was satisfied of the pardon of his sins and of his acceptance with God; but it was thirteen years after this time before that happy day dawned upon him.

After a great deal of thought, reading, conversation with pious people, interchange of letters with his father and mother, and earnest prayer, he made up his mind to be a minister, and was ordained September 19, 1725.

John Wesley was ordained a Deacon by Bishop Potter, who from very humble life rose to a high place. He was rather a proud, stiff man, and a rigid high-churchman, but had a friendly feeling for the Methodists. Some one complained to him about them, but he only said, "These gentlemen are irregular; but they have done good, and I pray God to bless them." Wesley always thought well of Bishop Potter, and called him "a great and good man."

Wesley preached his first sermon at a small village called South Leigh. Forty-six years afterward he came there and preached again, and found one person who had heard his first sermon. In March, 1726, he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. A Fellow of an English college is a person who, on account of his good character and learning, is elected by the authorities of the college to share in its revenues and to teach the younger students as a tutor. In the course of time, if the Fellows are diligent and attentive to their duties they may be elected to professorships in their own or some other college. It is said that the room in which Wesley lived is still called "Wesley's room," and a vine that creeps round the window is called "Wesley's vine."

The young men in Wesley's college he liked very much. He said in a letter to his brother Samuel, who had helped him to obtain the Fellowship, "All the Fellows I have yet seen are both well-natured and well-bred." He now set himself to study harder than ever, and said to his brother, "Leisure and I have taken leave of one another. I propose to be busy as long as

I live;" and he was one of the busy men of the world to the day of his death.

In the summer of 1726, Wesley asked leave of absence from his college for a time to go and see his parents at Epworth. While he was there he usually read prayers and preached twice every Sunday. This was a great help to his father, who had two parishes on his hands. He still studied hard, and talked freely with his father and mother on religious subjects, and carefully wrote in his diary such rules and advice as he thought would be useful to him in after life.

About this time Charles Wesley had removed from Westminster School, where he had been a scholar for five years, to Christ Church College, Oxford. He was born December 8th, 1708, and was therefore five years younger than John. The names of John and Charles Wesley are forever associated in the history of Methodism. As a Christian Poet, Charles Wesley never had a superior, and a great many of the most familiar and beautiful hymns in our Hymn Book were written by him. John was also a fine poet, and composed some excellent hymns.

In September, 1726, John went back to Oxford, and gladly re-entered upon his studies. Everybody that knew him thought a great deal of him, as a man of good character and much learning. Two months after he came back, and when he was twenty-three, he was elected Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes in Lincoln College.

In thinking over what he ought to study carefully and thoroughly, Wesley made up his mind to study such things as would make a quick and sure return. He said to his mother that he agreed with her in the opinion that there are many things it is not worth while for a person

to know. He said if he had a hundred or two hundred years to live, he might be tempted to spend part of his time on curious trifles, but in a short life he thought people should try and learn those things that will be really useful to them.

Besides this care in selecting his studies, he now began to devote himself more earnestly to a religious life. He watched closely against sin; he advised others to be religious "according," he says, "to that scheme of religion by which I modelled my own life." Wesley now met with two books that had a powerful influence on his life. These were Law's "Christian Perfection" and "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life." He read them with great interest, and though he did not agree with the author on some points, yet he was by them more deeply convinced "of the exceeding height, and breadth, and depth of the law of God." The light shone so strongly upon his soul that he saw everything in a new view; he prayed most fervently, and resolved to keep the whole law, inward and outward, to the utmost of his power. He could not rest in being half a Christian, and says he determined to give God all his soul, body and substance. Wesley was truly sincere in trying to be religious, if any man ever was, but it was years after this time before he could say that he knew that God for Christ's sake had pardoned his sins.

In February, 1727, Wesley took his degree of Master of Arts. He was now established in his college as a man of great talent and learning, and of course had a number of companions who knew and cared but little about religion. He determined to break off from all associates except such as he thought would help him to be a Christian. When wild and thoughtless young men came to his room, he treated them kindly, but to



Mrs. Susannah Wesley.

Face page 13.

the question, "When will you come to see me?" he says, "I returned no answer. When they had come a few times, and found I still declined returning the visit, I saw them no more. I knew many reflections would follow; but that did not move me, as I knew full well it was my calling to go through evil report and good report."

He laid down a plan of study which he followed closely. Mondays and Tuesdays he gave to Greek and Roman classics, historians and poets; Wednesdays to logic and ethics; Thursdays to Hebrew and Arabic; Fridays to metaphysics and natural philosophy; Saturdays to oratory and poetry, chiefly composing; Sundays to divinity. In his spare hours he studied French and mathematics, and occasionally experimented in optics. Wesley's plan for reading was this—he read a book regularly through, and then transcribed in a common-place book such passages as struck his mind as valuable and beautiful. By this method he forced himself to do much hard work, but he stored his mind with a vast amount of knowledge.

Wesley's father was now sixty-five years old, and suffered much with sickness. He was very anxious to have John to come and assist him in his pastoral work. Mrs. Wesley's health was also bad, and these reasons induced the loving and dutiful son to leave his College studies and become his father's curate at Epworth and Wroote.

We have already described Epworth where the Wesley family lived. Wroote is pictured as a wretched place, surrounded with bogs and inhabited by a very poor class of people. Samuel Wesley, John's brother, said the parsonage was roofed with straw and made lively by the mingled music of "kittens and whelps, pigs and porkets,

bellowing kine and bleating lambs, quacking ducks and fluttering hens." The church was a small brick building, and the population of the town one or two hundred dull and ignorant people. This does not look like a place suited to an elegant scholar like Wesley, but he seems to have been contented, and perhaps would have staid there many years if he had not been called back to Oxford. His services were so much needed there that Dr. Morely, the Rector of the College, wrote him an earnest letter to come on at once and resume the duties of his Fellowship. He left the poor little parish of Wroote and the musical parsonage, and returned to Oxford in November, 1729.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN JOHN WESLEY reached Oxford, he found his brother Charles earnestly trying to lead a truly religious life. Charles, when he came to college, was very sprightly and full of fun and frolic. John spoke to him about religion, but Charles answered him gaily "What, would you have me to be a saint all at once?" This did not then give much promise of a pious life; but while John was away at Wroote, a great change came over Charles. He became very serious, read good books with attention, and attended the weekly sacrament. He induced two or three of his fellow students to join him in his plans for leading a better life.

On his return to Oxford John was much pleased to see such a change in his brother, and at once joined the little band in their good work. They were so regular in their behavior that a young man in one of the colleges called them *Methodists*. "This name," says Wesley, "was new and quaint, and it clave to them immediately, and, from that time, all that had any connection with them were thus distinguished." Wesley further says, this name "was given in allusion to an ancient sect of physicians, of the time of the Emperor Nero, who taught that almost all diseases might be cured by a specific *method* of diet and exercise." But this was not the first time the name was used in England. As early as 1693 a pamphlet was issued in that country with the title "A War Among the Angels of the Churches; wherein is shewed the Principles of the New Methodists in the great point of Justification. By a Country Professor of Jesus Christ." It is also said that as early as 1639 in

some of the sermons of the day reference was made to "plain pack-staff Methodists, who esteem all flowers of rhetoric in sermons no better than stinking weeds, and all elegance of speech no better than profane spells." So it seems that those who were called Methodists at that early day, almost a hundred years before the Oxford Methodists arose, were a plain people and liked plain preaching. As a matter of interest we give the names of those young men at Oxford who were in derision called Methodists. The four who first bore this name were John and Charles Wesley, Robert Kirkham, and William Morgan; to these were afterward added, George Whitefield, John Clayton, J. Broughton, Benjamin Ingham, James Hervey, John Whitelamb, Westley Hall, John Gambold, Charles Kinchin, and several others. These men were in after years scattered, and most of them differed widely in religious views, but they must ever be noted in the history of religious revivals as the men who started Methodism on its way as a form of "Christianity in earnest." The leader of the band was John Wesley. He was nicknamed in the university "the Curator of the Holy Club." Some called him "a crack-brained enthusiast," but none of these things moved him. To a man who reviled him one of the chaplains said that John Wesley "would one day be a standard bearer of the cross, either in his own country or beyond the seas." The young men of the Methodist band were of one heart; they were orderly in everything, and punctually kept all the rules of the Church of England, and all the regulations of their respective colleges. They cheerfully shared their worldly goods with each other, and were glad to extend a helping hand to the sick and poor. They met every night and reviewed what had been done during the day, and laid their plans for the next day's

work. Their meetings were opened with prayer, and closed with a plain supper. They had various plans of usefulness. Some talked with young students and sought to draw them away from bad company; others visited and instructed poor families; some taught school, while others regularly visited the parish workhouse and the prisons, where they taught the inmates and circulated plain, good books. They raised a fund among themselves to buy books, medicines, and other things they might need in visiting the prisoners and paupers. One of the schools they attended John Wesley had founded, and he paid the teacher out of his own means and clothed nearly all the scholars.

Now, what did the world say as it looked upon the work of these early Methodists? Why, it called them such names as "Bible bigots," and "Bible moths," "The Godly Club," "The Enthusiasts," "The Reforming Club," &c., &c. In the midst of all these jeers and revilings, Wesley, the leader, was calm, and led his friends on in the path of duty with a cheerful spirit. He set the example and urged his comrades to diligence, method and early rising. From five to six o'clock, every morning and evening, he spent in secret prayer. His pity for the poor was very strong, and his charity limited only by his means. One day a poor girl whom the Methodist band kept at school, came to see him, shivering with cold. Wesley said to her, "You seem half-starved; [starved with cold, is a common expression in England even at this day,] have you nothing to wear but that linen gown?" The poor girl said, "Sir, this is all I have." He put his hand into his pocket, but found little money. The walls of his room were hung with pictures; he glanced at them and felt conscience-stung. "It struck me," he says, "will thy Master say, 'Well

done, good and faithful steward?" thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold! O, Justice! O, Mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid?"

It was the custom of the Oxford Methodists to give away each year all they had, after providing for all their own real wants. "One of them," says Wesley, (the case was his own,) "had thirty pounds a year; he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away thirty-two. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received a hundred and twenty pounds; still he lived as before on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor all the rest." Wesley was careful of both time and money. While at Oxford, finding he awoke every night at about twelve, he concluded that it was caused by lying in bed longer than necessary. He procured an alarm clock, which awoke him each morning at an earlier hour, until he found that when awakened at four, he lay awake no longer during the night, and he, therefore, fixed that as his hour for rising. Sixty years after, referring to this method, he wrote: "By the grace of God, I have risen at four o'clock ever since, and, taking the year round, I don't lie awake a quarter of an hour together in a month." This is wonderful.

Wesley was a hard student and a great reader, but to him the book above all other books was the Bible. He says: "In 1729, I began not only to read, but to study the Bible, as the one, the only standard of truth, and the only model of pure religion. Hence I saw in a clearer and clearer light, the indispensable necessity of

having 'the mind which was in Christ,' and of 'walking as Christ also walked.'"

The doctrinal views of Wesley at this early day were such as he adhered to in after life, and in the midst of all his labors and conflicts. In a sermon preached before the University of Oxford, January 1, 1731, Wesley gave his views on the leading doctrines of the Bible. He said, "Without the Spirit of God we can do nothing but add sin to sin; it being as impossible for us even to think a good thought without His supernatural assistance as to create ourselves, or to renew our whole souls in righteousness and true holiness. He alone can quicken those who are dead unto God, and breathe into them the breath of life." By holiness of heart he meant "the being cleansed from sin, from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit; and, by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were also in Christ Jesus; the being so renewed in the image of our mind as to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect." In 1765, Wesley, referring to this early sermon, said, "It contained all I now teach concerning salvation from all sin, and loving God with an undivided heart." This blessing of a pure heart Wesley held was to be obtained "alone by faith in the great truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." To all who exercised this saving grace was given the Spirit, which witnessed with their own spirits that they were the children of God. A good soldier of Jesus, Wesley said, will renounce the works of darkness, and every appetite and every affection which is opposed to the law of God. "This," he said, "is God's short and plain account of true religion and virtue. He hath chosen the living sacrifice of the heart. Let it be continually offered up to God through Jesus Christ in flames of holy love." These were the

doctrines of the Oxford Methodists. Can any man object to them?

Let us look for a moment beyond Oxford at the condition of society in England. By a glance at the morals of city and country, we may see what Methodism had to fight against in its first movements. A Bishop of the Church of England said in a sermon on the Reformation of Manners, "The Lord's day is now the devil's market day. More murders, more drunkenness, more quarrels and murders, more sin is contrived and committed on this day than on all the other days of the week together." This statement is enough to show us the condition of the middle and poorer classes. In high life pride, lust, luxury, and extravagance were common sins. The usual sports of the people were dances, puppet-shows, prize-fights, cock-fights, wrestling, foot races and the like. The state of religion was as low as it well could be. Dissenters and Church men fought each other more vigorously than they fought sin. In 1713, Bishop Burnet said of the condition of the Church of England: "The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers; I mean the plainest parts of the Scriptures. They can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the gospels, or of the catechism itself." If this describes many of the clergy, what must have been the moral state of their flocks? In the midst of such scenes Methodism went forth on its mission.

Wesley made occasional journeys from Oxford to visit his father, who was fast sinking under the weight of years. His father and his brother Samuel were very

anxious that he should succeed to the Epworth parish; but he declined to apply for it. He felt unwilling to be confined to a single parish, and thought he could better serve God and his Church by remaining at Oxford. About this time Wesley became acquainted with George Whitefield, who soon joined the Methodist band, and afterward became one of the most earnest, eloquent, and successful preachers that the world has ever known.

Mr. Samuel Wesley, Sr., died April 25, 1735, and not long after John was asked by some of his friends to go as a missionary to America. He thought of the matter seriously, and consulted various friends on the subject. He went to Epworth to talk with his mother about it, and the answer of that noble woman was worthy of her. John told her the trustees of the colony of Georgia wished him to go out as a missionary. His mother replied: "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice if they were all so employed."

Wesley made up his mind to go to Georgia, and embarked for his distant field October 14, 1735. He was accompanied by his brother Charles, Benjamin Ingham and Charles Delamotte. "Our aim," he said, "in leaving our native country was not to avoid want, nor to gain the dross of riches or honor; but singly this—to save our souls; to live to the glory of God." On his voyage to America, Wesley was made to feel that his religion was not such as cast out of his heart the fear of death. On board the ship were a number of Moravians from Germany, whose steadiness and faith in the midst of danger deeply impressed his mind. They had several violent storms on the passage. The third storm was terrible. The English passengers were in great alarm. Wesley went to the part of the ship where the Germans were and found them all calm, and indeed peaceful. In

the midst of the tempest while many of the English were screaming, "they calmly sung on." Wesley asked one of them afterward, Were you not afraid? He said, "I thank God, no." "But," said Wesley, "were not your women and children afraid?" He replied, "No, our women and children are not afraid to die." The man's words made a deep impression on Wesley, and he felt that these simple minded Germans had a secret spring of peace to which he was a stranger.

On the 6th of February, 1736, he landed on American ground. General Oglethorpe, the chief of the party, "led us," says Wesley, "to a rising ground, where we all knelt down to give thanks." Wesley had a conversation with Rev. Mr. Spangenberg, one of the Moravian preachers, which led him to examine his heart more closely. Having asked this German brother as to how he ought to conduct himself in his new field, Spangenberg said: "My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" "I was surprised," says Wesley, "and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and asked, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' I paused, and said, 'I know he is the Saviour of the world.' 'True,' he replied, 'but do you know he has saved you?' I answered, 'I hope he has died to save me.' He only added, 'Do you know yourself?' I said, 'I do.' But I fear they were vain words. "

Wesley entered with zeal upon his duties as the minister at Savannah, and by every means in his power sought to benefit the people; he also hoped to be able to preach successfully among the Indians, and held several interviews with their leading men, but in this he was disappointed. He was subjected to much bad treatment

at Savannah, and after a service of about two years he returned to England. But his work in America was not a failure. George Whitefield came to Georgia after Wesley left, and he wrote of his friend: "The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people; and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake. Oh that I may follow him as he followed Christ."

Wesley reached England February 1, 1738, and began his work by preaching at the tavern where he lodged. On the 3d of February he arrived at London and waited on the Georgia trustees, told them of affairs in the Colony when he left it, and gave up his authority as their minister at Savannah. He preached the next Sunday, and never ceased to do so for fifty-three years. He preached in many places, and always earnestly and with good results. As he used to visit and talk to the prisoners at Oxford, so in London he began this work anew. In Newgate prison he preached to the convicts, among whom were nine persons condemned to die. These poor men were much softened under the sermon, and begged that Wesley and his brother Charles would be with them on the day of their execution. They promised to be with them, and on the sad day Charles preached a suitable sermon. The poor men wept, and some of them were filled with peace. Wesley says: "It was the most glorious instance I ever saw of faith triumphing over sin and death."

In this year, 1738, Wesley was converted. Before this time he says he was almost a Christian. He tried to do what he believed to be right in the sight of God. He prayed, he fasted, he read good books, he went to church regularly, he visited the sick and relieved their wants as

far as he was able. He was fighting sin, he says, all the time, but he was not able to conquer it. He was striving with sin, but he was not freed from it. He did not have the witness of the Holy Spirit that he was a child of God, and for this reason he had many unhappy hours. We have seen that he was alarmed at the prospect of death in the storm on his voyage to America. This fear still clung to him. He says of himself that he did not have peace because he "sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law." But the time was near for him to trust in Jesus with the simple faith of a little child. He was a very learned man, and knew a great deal, but he had to come to Jesus and just ask him like a child to give him a new heart. While Wesley was in trouble about his spiritual condition he met with a good German man named Peter Bohler, who gave him a great deal of light on the true doctrine of salvation by faith. Bohler told him, when a man is deeply penitent on account of his sins, and gives them all up and comes to God through Christ and believes with all his heart that Jesus has died for him, and that God for Jesus' sake will accept him, he shall be saved from his sins and God will give him His Holy Spirit to witness to his heart that he is pardoned. Wesley was surprised to hear this; he tried to object to the doctrine, but the more he read the Bible the more clearly he saw that this is the very doctrine of the Bible. He says: "Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help Thou my unbelief.' I was now thoroughly convinced; and, by the grace of God, I resolved to seek this faith unto the end.

1. By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my own works of righteousness; on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up.
2. By adding

to the constant use of all the other means continual prayer for this very thing—justifying, saving faith, and full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me; a trust in Him as my Christ, my sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.”

Several of the early Methodists were ahead of Wesley in finding salvation by simple faith in Christ. Whitefield rejoiced in it, and Charles Wesley, while lying ill of pleurisy, received the blessing. His brother John and two or three friends came to see him, and while in the room sang a hymn of praise. After they left, and while he was thinking and praying he was enabled to believe, and was filled with peace and love. But John was still a mourner, carrying with him a heavy heart. He felt that he deserved only wrath, but in the midst of his gloom, that comforting promise was before him, “Believe, and thou shalt be saved.” He passed three days of deep distress. On the fourth day, May 24, 1738, at five o'clock in the morning he opened his Testament and his eyes fell first on these words, “There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature.” Just before he went out of the house he opened on the text, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” In the afternoon he went to church in the great Cathedral of St. Paul's in London, and heard an anthem which was full of comfort to his troubled spirit. At night he went to a little prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street, and while there he heard a person read Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans, in which that great Reformer teaches the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. While he listened to the words of the man who had himself been saved by faith, Wesley felt a change that astonished him. Let him tell us how he felt.

“I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and I then testified openly to all these, what I now first felt in my heart.”

This happy meeting broke up about ten o'clock, and he went with some zealous friends to the room of his sick brother, where they sang a hymn with joyful hearts, and after prayer went to their homes. Wesley had for ten or twelve years tried faithfully to practice religion, but now he felt it in his heart as a power from heaven. In a sermon preached fifty years after this, he says before this day he was “as a servant of God,” now he knew he was a child of God, and felt happy and safe. But the devil began to tempt him soon after that night when his heart was strangely warmed. He says, he was much buffeted with temptations which returned again and again. And how much like the temptations of the young convert now were those that Wesley felt. He says, the day after the enemy injected a fear that the change was not great enough, and that his faith was not genuine. Two days afterward his soul was in peace, but in heaviness because of manifold temptations. The next day after this he felt a want of joy, and he resolved to spend a part of every morning, until he went to church, in unceasing prayer. Seven days after he says he grieved the Spirit of God, not only by not watching unto prayer, but likewise by speaking with sharpness, instead of tender love, of one who was not sound in the faith. God seemed to hide his face, and he was troubled and in heaviness until the next morning. But Wesley fought hard against the devil; he prayed and read the Bible, and gained more and more strength every day.

CHAPTER III.

EIGHTEEN days after Wesley was converted he went to Oxford, but his old Methodist friends were all gone. He felt lonely, and yet he was full of peace and joy. While at the University he preached before the masters and students on the text, "By grace are ye saved through faith." In this sermon he shows with great clearness and power that the faith which saves a man from sin is "a full reliance on the blood of Christ,—a trust in the merits of His life, death, and resurrection,—a recumbency upon Him as our atonement and our life, as given for us and living in us; and, in consequence hereof, closing with Him and cleaving to Him, as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, or, in one word, our salvation." He described the salvation obtained by faith to be "a salvation from the guilt of all past sin; from servile fear; from the power of sin. The man who has it is pardoned; he has the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God; he is born again, and he lives without sin." Such was the doctrine which Wesley preached before the University of Oxford, and which he maintained all his life as the doctrine of God's holy word. He preached another sermon, in which he showed from the Bible that "the grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free in all and for all." He also now began a work which he kept up to the day of his death—the printing and circulation of religious tracts. He wrote one called: "The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith and Good Works: extracted from the Homilies of the

Church of England." He shows in this tract that the doctrine of the Church of which he was a minister to the day of his death is, that the sinner is justified by faith only; and yet that this faith does not exclude repentance, hope, love and fear of God, but does shut them out from all part in justification. Wesley says of them, "Although they be present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not altogether." "Neither," says he, "does faith shut out good works, necessary to be done afterward; but we are not to do them with the intent of being justified by doing them." Wesley also showed that "justification is the office of God only,—a blessing which we receive of Him by His free mercy, through the merits of His beloved Son." And he further says: "The right and true Christian faith is not only to believe that holy Scripture and the articles of our faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ; whereof doth follow a loving heart to obey His commandments." Wesley also maintained that without this true faith, the works we do cannot be good and acceptable to God. "Faith," he says, "giveth life to the soul, and they are as much dead to God who want faith, as they are to the world whose bodies want souls. Without faith all we do is but dead before God, be it ever so glorious before men."

These were the Bible doctrines that Wesley held and preached; and the preaching of them produced one of the greatest revivals of religion that has been seen in the world since the days of the Apostles. It began in England and spread abroad until it now reaches into every part of the world. It was not by worldly might, nor wealth, nor wisdom that Methodism made its way, but by the plain, faithful, earnest, preaching of the Gos-

pel, and by the zealous, prayerful, self-denying lives of those who became Methodists.

Mr. Wesley, as we have seen, was greatly indebted to the simple hearted Moravians for guiding him with all his learning in the way of life. His talks with Spangenberg in Georgia, and with Peter Bohler in London, with what he saw of the Moravians in their social meetings, made him desire to know more about them. He therefore made up his mind to visit them at their chief places in Germany. Three weeks after he was converted he started to the settlement of the Moravians at Herrnhuth. He landed at Rotterdam and set out at once and on foot to find the Moravians. He was much pleased with the smooth, shady roads, the rich fields and beautiful gardens of the country. He passed through a number of fine towns and cities, and at Cologne, which he says was the ugliest, dirtiest place he had ever seen, he and his company had quite an adventure. They had been in to see the fine cathedral, and as they came out a procession of Roman Catholics passed along the opposite side of the churchyard. One of Wesley's companions did not take off his hat, when one of the Catholics cried out, "Knock down the Lutheran dog." But they all stepped back into the church, and thus prevented a painful scene. Continuing his journey, Wesley came to Marienborn, near which place Count Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravians, lived. Here he staid two weeks talking with the brethren in Latin or English, and hearing the sermons of the Count. He was much pleased with the godly simplicity of these people, and wrote to his brother Samuel, "God has given me at length the desire of my heart. I am with a Church whose conversation is in heaven; in whom is the mind that was in Christ, and who so walk as He walked. As they have all one Lord and one faith, so

they are all partakers of one Spirit—the spirit of meekness and love, which uniformly and continually animates all their conversation.” In one of the many lives of Wesley a story is told of the method adopted by Count Zinzendorf to make him humble and simple. The Count looked upon him as a pupil, and one day ordered him to work in the garden. He went to digging, and after he had been at work some time with his coat off, the Count ordered him to enter a carriage and pay a visit to a nobleman who lived near by. Wesley wished to put on his coat, but his teacher would not let him do so, saying, “You must be simple, my brother.” Wesley, we are told, quietly submitted, and rode without his coat.

From this place he went to Herrnhuth, where he spent two weeks. Here he had the happy privilege of hearing several sermons from Christian David, a pious leader among the Moravians. He was benefitted by his visit, and greatly pleased with the humble, quiet, godly life of these Christian people. He wrote home, “I would gladly spend my life here. Oh, when shall this Christianity cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea?” Wesley left Herrnhuth August 12, and came to London September 16, 1738. He preached three times the day after he reached the city. Some weeks afterward he and his brother Charles were called before the Bishop of London to answer a charge of preaching an absolute assurance of salvation. When they came before Bishop Gibson, and were introduced to him, he said, “If by assurance you mean an inward persuasion, whereby a man is conscious within himself, after examining his life by the law of God, and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation, and acceptable to God, I don’t see how any good Christian can be without such assurance.”

The Wesleys meant more than this by the doctrine of assurance which they preached, but the Bishop was sound in his views as far as he went, and their preaching covered his ground. They talked on several other points, and when they parted the Wesleys asked him not to receive any more charges against them except from two or three witnesses. The Bishop said, "No, by no means; and you may have free access to me at all times." This was a sign of the storm soon to burst upon the Methodists. A clergyman of the Church of England, William Warburton, quite famous as an author and afterwards a Bishop, was among the first to shoot an arrow at them. Writing to a friend he says, "What think you of our new set of fanatics, called the Methodists? There is one Wesley, who told a friend of mine, that he had lived most deliciously last summer in Georgia, sleeping under trees, and feeding on boiled maize, sauced with the ashes of oak leaves; and that he will return thither, and then will cast off his English dress, and wear a dried skin, like the savages, the better to ingratiate himself with them. It would be well for virtue and religion if this humor would lay hold generally of our overheated bigots, and send them to cool themselves in the Indian marshes."

This same writer gave utterance to another slander against the Methodists. He says John Wesley and another Methodist travelling on foot in very warm weather were entertained by a minister of their acquaintance. On going into their room in the morning their host found a vessel full of blood, "and on asking the occasion of this free blood letting, was told it was their method, when the blood grew rebellious, to draw it off by opening a vein; that they had been heated with travel, and thought it proper to cool themselves."

Such were the pitiful slanders told on Wesley and his followers, even by leading ministers of the Church of England.

We have now reached the time when Wesley felt called to go out into the highways and hedges and call sinners to repentance. The spirit of revival was abroad in the world at the time that Methodism rose at Oxford. In Northampton, in New England, the great preacher, Jonathan Edwards, was the instrument in bringing about a wonderful revival. He preached the great doctrine of justification by faith alone. The flame of revival spread far and wide in America, and the work of grace was known as "The Great Awakening." About the same time a great work broke out in Wales under the preaching of Howell Harris. He went to the University of Oxford after the Wesleys left it for America. He was happily converted, and began to preach in Wales at the very time that Wesley was preaching in Georgia. Harris visited from house to house and talked to the people about religion. A deep concern was felt among all classes. Great crowds flocked to hear Harris preach. The magistrates and the clergy tried to stop him, but he went on with his good work, travelling over the country and often preaching as many as five or six sermons a day to great crowds. Howell Harris was an itinerant preacher a year and a half before Wesley and Whitefield began their out-door preaching.

Near the same time a revival began in Scotland. In the town of Kirkintilloch a few children began to hold prayer-meetings, and from the labors of these little ones the work began to spread on all sides. The young converts held meetings in barns, in schoolhouses, or in the fields, and many hundreds were converted. In addition to these, we have already referred to the religious revival

in Germany under the preaching of the Moravians. It is worthy of notice that these revivals in different countries were all the fruit of the same kind of preaching. Salvation by simple faith in Christ was the theme of Jonathan Edwards preaching in America, of Howell Harris in Wales, of Mr. Robe in Scotland, and of Christian David in Germany. It was also the theme of the Wesleys, Whitefield, and their colaborers in the great revival on whose stirring scenes we are about to enter.

At the close of the year 1738, Wesley was shut out of nearly every pulpit of the Established Church. For three months in the early part of 1739 he preached only five or six times. Burning with zeal for God, he could not endure to be silent. He left London and went to Bristol. Whitefield had gone to the same town, and all the churches being shut against him, he went out to Kingswood and preached in the open air to about two hundred colliers. This was on February 17, 1739, and is the date of the first open air service held by the Methodists. The news of the preaching spread far and wide. The people flocked to hear the eloquent preacher. At the second service Whitefield had two thousand hearers, at the third four thousand, and at his fifth service there were ten thousand. Whitefield was amazed and was filled with joy. He went from place to place preaching with wonderful power and effect. At a place called Rose Green he had twenty thousand hearers. He sent for Wesley to come and help him. He came and heard Whitefield preach an open air sermon. He says: "I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done

in a church." On the 2d of April Wesley followed the example of Whitefield and preached in the fields. He says: "April 1.—In the evening, Mr. Whitefield being gone, I began expounding our Lord's sermon on the mount, (one pretty remarkable precedent of field preaching, though I suppose there were churches at that time also,) to a little society which was accustomed to meet once or twice a week in Nicholas Street." The next day he boldly broke ground as a field preacher. "Monday, April 2.—At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining the city, to about three thousand people." The text from which Wesley preached his first field sermon was strikingly appropriate. It was this: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Wesley was now committed to field preaching, and he tells us why he preached the gospel in the open air of heaven. He says he was forbidden as by general consent, though not by any judicial sentence, to preach in any church; that no rooms that he could get would hold a tenth of the people that wanted to hear the gospel. He said he determined to do in England what he had done in a warmer climate—go out of doors and preach under the trees, or on the common, or by the wayside. It was matter of necessity that he preached in the open air. Some of his friends wished him to go back to College and be a tutor or professor, or to take charge of a parish. He declined both, saying he had no business at college, as he had no office

there and no pupils, and as to a parish, none had been offered him. "God," he says, "in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's parish; that is, not to do it at all, seeing I have no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom, then, shall I hear? God or man? If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge ye. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation." These are noble words. If we would know the motto of Wesley, and the secret of his success, we have it in one word, WORK. No man that ever lived worked harder or more constantly than he did. Once when kept waiting some time by a slow person, he exclaimed with some impatience, "I have lost ten minutes forever!"

Wesley was now openly committed to his work of saving souls, and he preached to them wherever they might gather to hear the word. He got leave to preach one day in a church, but just as he was going to it he received a letter saying that the minister had heard that he was mad, and therefore he could not use his church. Wesley was not troubled at this; he took his stand in the open air and preached to the people. Two bad men tried to confuse him by singing ballads, but Wesley and his friends began to sing hymns, and they outsang the bad fellows. Wesley was a man of courage. He was calm in the midst of furious mobs, and equally so when opposed by fashionable and worldly sinners. At Bath, then the most famous place in England for gaiety and vice, Wesley was to preach. A vile man, a gambler and a rake, commonly called Beau Nash, made up his mind

to prevent Wesley from preaching. Wesley knew of his purpose, but this did not deter him from his work. The boastings of Nash made the congregation very large. People of all classes came out to see Wesley put down by Beau Nash. Wesley began his sermon, and after a few moments the Beau appeared dressed in the tip of the fashion and wearing a big white hat. Then came the following scene :

Beau—"By what authority, sir, do you dare do what you are now doing?"

Wesley—"By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by him who is now Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the gospel.'"

Beau—"But this is a conventicle, and contrary to act of parliament."

Wesley—"No, conventicles are seditious meetings; but here is no sedition; therefore it is not contrary to act of parliament."

Beau—"I say it is; and, besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits."

Wesley—"Sir, did you ever hear me preach?"

Beau—"No."

Wesley—"How, then, can you judge of what you never heard?"

Beau—"I judge by common report."

Wesley—"Common report is not enough. Give me leave to ask you, sir, is not your name Nash?"

Beau—"It is."

Wesley—"Sir, I dare not judge of you by common report."

This sharp thrust rather disconcerted the fop, but after a little silence he said, "I desire to know what this people come here for?" At this moment an old woman

rose and said to Wesley, "Sir, leave him to me; let an old woman answer him. You, Mr. Nash, take care of your body; we take care of our souls; and for the good of our souls we came here." This was a home shot, and the great Beau Nash slunk away in silence. As Wesley was going home after preaching the street was full of people who called out, Which is he? to which Wesley would reply, "I am he," and instantly they were silent. When he got to the house where he was staying, the servant told him several ladies wished to speak with him. Wesley went into the room where they were, and saluting them said, "Ladies, the maid mistook; you only wanted to look at me. I do not expect that the rich and great should want either to speak with me, or to hear me; for I speak the plain truth; a thing you hear little of, and do not desire to hear." After a little further conversation he retired. Wesley may have thought the gay and rich and great did not desire to hear him, but the truth he preached took hold on many of them, and in after years some of the most earnest Methodists were found among the noble and rich people of England.

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN WESLEY speaks often at this period of visiting certain Societies to whom he preached. These were not the "United Societies of the people called Methodists." They were small bodies of religious people who met at certain times, either in private dwellings or rented halls, for the purpose of encouraging and instructing one another in the work of faith. They usually prayed together, sung psalms, and heard sermons or exhortations from ministers or other godly persons who might be present. They also engaged in works of charity, such as releasing imprisoned debtors, relieving the poor and sick, and sending orphan children to school. They had existed many years before the Wesleys began their work. For several years the two brothers with Whitefield preached to these societies with great success. They existed at Oxford, London, Gloucester, Bristol and other places. The power of the word of God at their meetings was often such as to astonish even the most zealous and devout Christians.

We have seen that Whitefield began open air preaching among the colliers of Kingswood near Bristol. Six weeks afterward he established a school among these poor and ignorant workers in the coal mines, who gave him nearly a hundred dollars for this purpose. A few days after this he laid the foundation stone of the house, knelt upon it and offered prayer for the success of the enterprise. Whitefield collected some money in other places, and a few months after sailed for America, leav-

ing Wesley to carry on the work he had so well begun. Wesley engaged in the plans of his friend with zeal, and begged money wherever he went for the "collier's school," and thus Kingswood, which remains to this day a noble monument to those faithful men, was established. Thus Methodism founded a school before a society was organized, and from that day she has been the fast friend of education.

In November, 1739, Wesley, being in London, was called upon by two gentlemen who urged him to preach in a place called the Foundery. He reluctantly consented. "Sunday, Nov. 11th," he says, "I preached at eight to five or six thousand in the place which had been the king's foundery for cannon." This place, which was "a vast, uncouth heap of ruins," he was urged to buy. He bought it for about \$550, but it required a good deal more money to fit it up as a place of worship, and the entire cost of this grand old hive of Methodism was in all nearly \$4,000. As this was the first house of worship owned by the Methodists, the reader may like a description of it. The building had a front of one hundred and twenty feet and a depth of ninety-three. It had two front doors; one led to the chapel, the other to the preacher's house, school and band room. A bell in a plain belfry was rung every morning at five for early service, and every evening at nine for family worship. The chapel would hold fifteen hundred persons; it had no pews, but on the main floor in front of the pulpit were a dozen seats for female worshippers. It had side and front galleries. Under the front galleries were the free seats for women; under the side galleries the free seats for men. In the front gallery women sat exclusively, in the side galleries no one but men. "From the beginning," says Wesley, "the men and women sat apart as

they always did in the primitive church; and none were suffered to call any place their own, but the first comers sat down first. They had no pews; and all the benches for rich and poor were of the same construction." Behind the chapel was a room eighty feet long and twenty feet wide, called the band room. Here in winter the five o'clock service was held, here the classes met, and at two o'clock every Wednesday and Friday prayer meetings were held here. The north end of this room was fitted up with desks for a school, and in the opposite one was Wesley's book room, where his publications were sold. Over this large room were Wesley's private apartments; here he lodged when in London, and here his honored mother died. Attached to the chapel was a house for his assistant preachers and his servants, and a coach house and stable completed the establishment.

This house was the cradle of Methodism. Wesley, after fitting it up, began to preach in it regularly about the close of the year 1739. He tells us how he conducted the services. He began with a short prayer, then sung a hymn, and then preached about half an hour, then sung a few verses, and closed with prayer. The theme of his preaching to the poor people that came to hear him as early as five o'clock in the morning was salvation by faith in Jesus. He was doing more to overturn infidelity by his plain, short sermons from the deal board pulpit of "The Foundery," than the great, titled clergymen who opposed him were doing by their long and learned essays read from the richly carved pulpits of the great cathedrals.

Wesley having now secured a centre for his labors as a reformer, was soon made glad that he was not to stem the torrent of sin that flowed over England alone. Besides his brother Charles and Mr. Whitefield, God raised

up a set of men known as "lay preachers," who were powerful helpers of Wesley in his great work. Most Methodist historians have named Thomas Maxfield as Wesley's first lay helper, but Mr. Tyerman in his recent elaborate life of Wesley regards this as a mistake. He says that John Cennick was the first Methodist lay preacher. Cennick was the son of Quakers who taught him in early life to fear God. In 1735, while walking along Cheapside, one of the great streets of London, he was convinced of sin, and at once broke off from card-playing, song-singing, theatre-going, and other bad habits. He was converted September 6, 1737, and not long after began to preach. Whitefield proposed him as the master of Kingswood School, and he went on foot from Reading to Bristol, sleeping all night in an old stable on his way. When he reached there he found that Wesley had gone to London. He was invited to go out to hear a young man read a sermon to the Kingswood colliers, but the preacher did not come, and Cennick had to preach in his place. His sermon had good effect. "The Lord," he says, "bore witness with my words, insomuch that many believed in that hour." He preached again and again to large crowds and with good results. Some persons desired Wesley to stop him, but so far from doing so, he encouraged him to go on in the work. He differed afterward with Wesley on doctrinal points, and after a short life of zeal and useful toil died in 1755.

Many of Wesley's friends were surprised, and some of them astonished and grieved, that he should encourage unordained and comparatively unlearned men to preach the gospel. It was indeed a startling innovation, but the times demanded it and Wesley boldly used such men as God raised up to help him in his war against the world, the flesh and the devil. They were men converted

to God and they lived by faith in Christ, and this is much more than can be said for thousands of clergymen who were in that day filling the pulpits of England.

When the Archbishop of Armagh met Charles Wesley at the Hotwells, Bristol, he said to him :

"I knew your brother well ; I could never credit all I heard respecting him and you ; but one thing in your conduct I never could account for, your employing laymen."

"My Lord," said Charles, "the fault is yours and your brethren's."

"How so?" asked the archbishop.

"Because," said Wesley, "you hold your peace, and the stones cry out."

"But I am told," said the primate, "that they are unlearned men."

"Some are," said the witty Charles, "and so the dumb ass rebukes the prophet."

The archbishop said no more.

The earnest labors of the Wesleys began now to yield substantial fruits. "In the latter end of the year 1739," writes John Wesley, "eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired that I should spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee the wrath to come. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which, from thenceforward, they did every Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join them (for the number increased daily), I gave those advices, from time to time, which I judged most needful for them, and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities. This was the rise of the United

Society, first in London, and then in other places." At the first meeting there were twelve persons; the next week thirty or forty. When they increased to about a hundred, Wesley took down their names and places of abode, for the purpose of calling on them at their homes.

Most people that know little of Methodism think that every phase and movement of the system was well studied and planned by Wesley beforehand. This is a great error. The growth of Methodism was providential. Wesley as a wise, thoughtful and prudent man, watched closely for the open doors and stood ready to enter in and work for the salvation of men. He says in reference to what we have just quoted from him, "Thus, without any previous plan, began the Methodist Society in England,—a company of people associated together to help each other to work out their own salvation." What a simple and beautiful definition of a body of persons striving to serve God on earth, and so to live as to hear him say at the last day, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord."

Wesley had a very sincere love for his Moravian brethren by whom he had been led on in the way of salvation, and for some time he joined heartily with them in their religious meetings, but he found that some of their leading men were teaching doctrines which he believed to be against the Bible, and he broke off from them. Many of the Moravians followed him, and became members of his Societies.

The life of Wesley was full of work and full of interesting incidents. While he was preaching on one occasion in a hall in London the floor gave way, but the cellar below was filled with hogsheads of tobacco, which caught the sinking mass of people so that nobody was

hurt, and after the floor settled a foot or two he quietly went on with his sermon. Wesley made up his mind to keep back from no sacrifice and from no place where work for God was to be done. He said, "I am ready to go to Abyssinia or to China, or whithersoever it shall please God to call me."

Besides the opposition Wesley met from proud church men, and from the wicked world, he had to meet harsh words from members of his own family. His brother Samuel, who died suddenly November 6, 1739, though a man of learning and of a generous mind, wrote some very hard things about the work his brothers were engaged in. When he heard that they were preaching in the fields to thousands of poor sinners, he wrote to his mother that "he had much rather have them picking straws within the walls than preaching in the area of Moorfields." Wesley was well prepared to meet all who opposed him in his work in the spirit of Christian love. He had in his heart the assurance from God's Holy Spirit that he was in the path of duty, and this gave him joy and peace, as it will to every one that tries to know and to do his duty.

As the Methodists increased the opposition to them grew stronger. Men wrote and spoke against them with much violence, and their doctrines and their preaching were put before the public in a false light. A number of persons urged Wesley to publish a tract to show what Methodism was. He did so, and sent out a little tract called "The Character of a Methodist." He says, "A Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him; one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. He rejoices evermore, prays without ceasing, and in

everything gives thanks. His heart is full of love to all mankind, and is purified from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind or malign affection. His own desire, and the one design of his life, is not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. He keeps not only some, or most of God's commandments, but all, from the least to the greatest. He follows not the customs of the world; for vice does not lose its nature through its becoming fashionable. He fares not sumptuously every day. He cannot lay up treasures upon earth any more than he can take fire in his bosom. He cannot adorn himself, on any pretence, with gold or costly apparel. He cannot join in any diversion that has the least tendency to vice. He cannot speak evil of his neighbor, no more than he can tell a lie. He cannot utter unkind or idle words. No corrupt communication ever comes out of his mouth. He does good unto all men; unto neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies." This is Wesley's portrait of a Methodist. Who recognizes himself when he looks into this mirror? "These," he says, "are the principles and practices of our sect; these are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do Methodists desire to be distinguished from other men."

Wesley had no sooner formed his Societies than he set to work to provide them with such books as he thought would promote the piety of the members. Singing he always regarded as a profitable and delightful part of public worship, and in this year, from which we date the rise of the Methodist Church, he published "Hymns and Sacred Poems," for the use of his people. He taught the early Methodists to sing the praises of God as a duty, and heartily did they, in the great congregations and in class meetings and prayer meetings, pour out their hearts in song. Methodists should never forget

the power of Christian hymns in their work, and no fancied refinement of the times and no affectation of what some people call the higher forms of sacred music, should cause them to throw away as useless the soul stirring songs of Zion which have always sounded through the hosts of our Israel in battles with the powers of darkness. Let us never turn aside from the old paths. In the way of our fathers we should still walk, for it has been the way of peace, joy and victory to many thousands.

The work of Wesley was now becoming so great as to demand his constant labor and care. In London and Bristol he saw the wonders of the power of God. A man who had robbed him of money collected for his Kingswood school was arrested, tried, and condemned to death. Wesley heard of it and rode two hundred miles to see the poor wretch, and by his efforts not only brought the man to a sense of his guilt and to deep penitence, but helped to secure a commutation of his sentence to transportation for life.

At Bristol, under his preaching, which was always calm, but very earnest and pointed, the convictions were powerful and indeed awful. While he was administering the holy sacrament to a sick person in a private house, a woman "sunk down as dead;" after several days of conflict with Satan she was joyfully converted. On one occasion after he had preached, a person cried out, "I have sinned beyond forgiveness. I have been cursing you in my heart, and blaspheming God. I have hell in my heart." That must have been awful preaching that could extort such cries. Again at Bristol, there was a mingled scene. In the midst of the exercises some of the people began to laugh, and though it was a grief to them to do so, they seemed to have no power to resist.

"One woman, who was known to be no dissembler, sometimes laughed till she was almost strangled; then she broke out into blasphemies, and stamped and struggled with incredible strength, so that four or five persons could scarcely hold her; then she cried out, 'O eternity, eternity! O that I had no soul! O that I had never been born!'" But at last she called upon Christ in faith, and her excitement ceased and her soul found peace. Wesley attributed these wild scenes to the power of the devil over the souls of those who had served him, but were now brought under the influence of the truth. He thought the devil would even sometimes try to divert the thoughts of good people in the same way, and gives an incident in his own history. He says one Sunday while he and his brother Charles were at Oxford, they were walking in the meadows singing psalms, when all at once Charles burst out laughing. John asked him if he was crazy, and began to feel angry. But a few moments after he began to laugh as loud as Charles, and neither of them could stop, and were forced to go home without singing another line.

Wesley was a most active man in helping the poor. In a very severe winter when hundreds of people in Bristol were thrown out of work, he went about collecting money and sometimes fed as many as a hundred and fifty a day. Soup houses for the poor some people think to be of very recent origin, but the Methodist leader did just such a work more than a hundred and thirty years ago. He was fond of visiting the poor prisoners, and did so regularly until the commanding officer at Bristol gave orders that no more Methodists should be admitted because they were all atheists. "These 'atheists,'" says Wesley, "were indeed as little children, not artful, not wise in their own eyes, not doting on controversy and

strife of words; but truly determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified." The Wesleys were men of great courage as well as great faith. Once when there was a riot among the Kingswood colliers on account of the high price of grain, Charles rushed into the midst of the excited crowd and finding some of the converted colliers, who had been forced to join the mob, he took some of each company, "marched with them singing to the school, and held a two hours' prayer meeting, that God would chain the lion."

A few months after this John Wesley came to Bristol, and while he was preaching, a mob filled the streets and alleys around the house, and shouted, cursed and swore dreadfully. A number of these bad fellows were arrested, and one of them hung himself within two weeks, another fell sick and sent for Wesley to pray for him, and a third confessed to him that he had been hired and made drunk to create a disturbance, but on reaching the place found he had lost the power of speech.

CHAPTER V.

SOME CONFUSION as to doctrines arose about this time (1740) among the Moravians with whom the Wesleys had worked very cordially, and it became necessary to restate clearly what the Methodists held as the teachings of the Bible, particularly on the subject of justifying faith.

Some of the leading Moravians held that there are no degrees of faith, that there is no justifying faith where there is any doubt or fear; or, in other words, that no man is justified unless he is at the same time sanctified and possessed of a clean heart. Wesley stated in opposition to this what he held and taught: "I assert," he says, "that a man may have a degree of justifying faith before he is wholly freed from all doubt and fear, and before he has, in the full, proper sense, a new, a clean heart. That a man may use the ordinances of God, the Lord's supper in particular, before he has such a faith as excludes all doubt and fear, and implies a new, a clean heart."

When the Moravians received this declaration, they declined to allow Wesley the use of their pulpit at Fetter Lane. Four days after this Wesley went to their lovefeast, and read a paper giving clearly his view of the errors into which they had fallen, and concluded in these words: "I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the 'law and the testimony.' I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But, as I find you more and

more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me." He then withdrew, and was followed by eighteen or nineteen of the Society. A few days after, the seceding members, numbering twenty-five men and fifty women, met at the Foundery, and so the Methodist Society was founded in this famous place July 23, 1740.

Wesley soon saw the beneficial result of standing on sound Bible doctrine. A few weeks after the separation from the Fetter Lane Society, Charles Wesley wrote to Whitefield: "The great work goes forward, maugre all the opposition of earth and hell. A little one is become a thousand. They grow in grace, particularly in humility, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus. Innumerable have been the devices to scatter this little flock. The roaring lion is turned a *still* lion, and makes havoc of the church by means of our spiritual brethren."

Whitefield wrote to Mr. Jas. Sutton deprecating the dissensions among the brethren, and closed in his own ardent manner: "O, how I long for heaven! Surely, there will be no divisions, no strife there, except who shall sing with most affection to the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne."

Besides the troubles just mentioned, others arose about the doctrine of election and reprobation. A man named Arcourt complained that he was not admitted to the Society meeting by Charles Wesley because of his opinions. "What opinions do you hold?" said John Wesley. He said, "That of election. I hold, a certain number is elected from eternity; and these must and will be saved; and the rest of mankind must and shall be damned."

From this time Methodism had to fight the huge,

gloomy, cruel dogmas of Calvinism. Whitefield embraced the views of Calvin, but his loving heart clung to the Wesleys as fellow-laborers in a wide and rich field. He wrote to Wesley that he differed with him on the election doctrine, but he asks, "Why should we dispute, when there is no probability of convincing? Will it not, in the end, destroy brotherly love, and insensibly take away from us that cordial union and sweetness of soul, which I pray God may always subsist between us? How glad would the enemies of the Lord be to see us divided!"

Wesley thought much on the subject, and at last felt it to be his duty to preach a sermon setting forth the differences between the Calvinists and the Methodists. His sermon was entitled "Free Grace," and the text was Romans viii: 32: "He that spared not his own son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" In an address to the reader, Wesley said, "Nothing but the strongest conviction, not only that what is here advanced is 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' but also that I am indispensably obliged to declare this truth to all the world, could have induced me openly to oppose the sentiments of those whom I esteem for their work's sake; at whose feet may I be found in the day of the Lord Jesus!"

In his sermon he laid down the principle that God's "free grace is free in all and for all." He then defines the doctrine of predestination, and shows the absurdity involved in it; namely, "Free grace in all is not free for all, but only for those whom God hath ordained to life. The greater part of mankind God hath ordained to death; and it is not free for them. Them God hateth; and therefore, before they were born, decreed they should die eternally. And this He absolutely de-

creed because it was His sovereign will. Accordingly, they are born for this, to be destroyed body and soul in hell. And they grow up under the irrevocable curse of God, without any possibility of redemption; for what grace God gives, He gives only for this, to increase, not to prevent, their damnation."

Wesley showed with all the power of his clear, logical mind that such were the horrid and repulsive features of Calvinism.

To such as were startled at this disclosure and who said, "This is not the predestination we hold, we hold only the election of grace," he replied: "Though you use softer words than some, you mean the self-same thing; and God's decree concerning the election of grace, according to your account of it, amounts to neither more nor less than what others call, 'God's decree of reprobation.' Call it therefore by whatever name you please, 'election, preterition, predestination, or reprobation,' it comes in the end to the same thing. The sense of all is plainly this—by virtue of an eternal, unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind are infallibly saved, and the rest infallibly damned; it being impossible that any of the former should be damned, or that any of the latter should be saved."

This plain language uncovers the doctrine and shows it in all its deformity and repulsiveness. But it is the only statement that is fair, and even the most skilful advocate of Calvinism cannot evade the force of Wesley's logic. He also gave his objections to the doctrine: "1. It renders all preaching vain; for preaching is needless to them that are elected; for they, whether with it, or without it, will infallibly be saved. And it is useless to them that are not elected; for they, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be damned. 2. It

directly tends to destroy that holiness which is the end of all the ordinances of God; for it wholly takes away those first motives to follow after holiness, so frequently proposed in Scripture, the hope of future reward and fear of punishment, the hope of heaven and fear of hell. 3. It directly tends to destroy several particular branches of holiness; for it naturally tends to inspire, or increase, a sharpness of temper, which is quite contrary to the meekness of Christ, and leads a man to treat with contempt, or coldness, those whom he supposes to be outcasts from God. 4. It tends to destroy the comfort of religion. 5. It directly tends to destroy our zeal for good works; for what avails it to relieve the wants of those who are just dropping into eternal fire! 6. It has a direct and manifest tendency to overthrow the whole Christian revelation; for it makes it unnecessary. 7. It makes the Christian revelation contradict itself; for it is grounded on such interpretation of some texts as flatly contradicts all the other texts, and indeed the whole scope and tenor of Scripture. 8. It is full of blasphemy; for it represents our blessed Lord as a hypocrite and dissembler, in saying one thing and meaning another,—in pretending a love which He had not; it also represents the most holy God as more false, more cruel and more unjust than the devil; for, in point of fact, it says that God has condemned millions of souls to everlasting fire for continuing in sin, which, for want of grace He gives them not, they are unable to avoid.”

Wesley closes his exposure of this dreadful doctrine in these words: “This is the blasphemy clearly contained in *the horrible decree* of predestination. And here I fix my foot. On this I join issue with every assertor of it. You represent God as worse than the devil. But you say you will prove it by Scripture. Hold! what will

you prove by Scripture? that God is worse than the devil? It cannot be. Whatever that Scripture proves, it can never prove this; whatever its true meaning be, this cannot be its true meaning. Do you ask, 'What is its true meaning then?' If I say, 'I know it,' you have gained nothing; for there are many Scriptures, the true sense whereof neither you nor I shall know till death is swallowed up in victory. But this I know, better were it to say it had no sense at all, than to say it had such a sense as this."

Such was Wesley's position in the conflict with Calvinism; and to the end of his life, amid all the strife that raged on this subject, he held to what he asserted in this sermon. He was to pass through a fiery ordeal in maintaining the truth as it is in Jesus, but he faltered not, and had the pleasure to know that the doctrine of God's fatherly love for all his earthly children, came to the hearts of the people with a hope that cheered them on in the way of salvation.

Besides the writings which were published against Methodism, those who went out as preachers suffered much rough treatment.

In the year 1740, while Charles Wesley was preaching at Bengeworth, a man called him "a scoundrel and a rascal," called on the mob to duck him, and actually caught the preacher by the nose and wrung it. John Cennick fared worse than this. He was preaching at a certain place; a mob soon gathered, and came with horns, drums and brass pans, making a terrible uproar. Some of the mob beat the people over their heads with the pans. A wild fellow brought a cat in a bag and a pack of hounds to have a chase. A man and his wife, keepers of an ale-house, rode through the congregation cutting right and left with their whips, and forcing their

horses to trample upon many persons. The children were told to gather dust, which the grown up people threw upon the preacher, while others hurled stones and dead cats and dogs at him.

But none of these things turned Wesley aside from the path of duty. Ridicule was added to persecution, but it did not stop the work of revival. The scenes under the preaching at the Foundery and other places were thrilling and impressive. One day a large number of rough men forced their way into the Foundery, and began to talk aloud and boldly, but soon the word broke them in pieces and they confessed their sins. A smuggler rushed in cursing and swearing, but when Wesley closed his sermon the poor man declared he would quit his sins and give his heart to God.

Wesley was incessant in his labors for the poor. He used to call upon his well to do friends for all the clothing they could spare, which he distributed to the poorer Methodists and others. To save others from want, he took them into one of his meeting houses, and for three or four months employed them in carding and spinning cotton.

The first watch night meeting ever held by the Methodists was proposed to Wesley by James Rogers, a Kingwood collier who had been a noted fiddler, but who, when awakened under the preaching of Charles Wesley, went home, threw his fiddle in the fire, and told his wife he was going to join the Methodists. At this watch night meeting, the people met at half-past eight. The house was filled, and Wesley says, "We concluded the year wrestling with God in prayer, and praising Him for the wonderful works which He had already wrought upon the earth." These meetings became popular among the Methodists, and they were held monthly; but some opposed

them, and desired Wesley to hold no more of them. He thought the matter over, compared these meetings with the practice of the primitive Christians, and said he could see no cause to forbid them. "Rather," he says, "I believed they might be made of more general use." The whole night, sometimes spent by the ancient Christians in prayer, called vigils, were present to Wesley's mind, and he thought the Methodists could be benefitted by following such an example.

He usually appointed the watch nights on the Friday nearest the full moon in each month, and he only desired those to attend who could do so without neglecting their business or families.

The calmness of Wesley in the midst of angry mobs was remarkable. One Sunday after preaching, when he reached his door, he found himself in the midst of a mob that quite closed him in. He says: "I rejoiced and blessed God, knowing this was the time I had long been looking for; and immediately spake to those that were next me of 'righteousness and judgment to come.' At first not many heard, the noise round about us being exceedingly great. But the silence spread further and further, till I had a quiet, attentive congregation; and when I left them, they all showed much love, and dismissed me with many blessings." Wesley's rule was, always face a mob, and though his life was often in peril, God delivered him from the teeth of the lions. But others were not so fortunate. In Wales, William Seward, a most excellent man and a travelling companion of Whitefield, was killed by a blow on the head. He was the first martyr of Methodism. With Howell Harris he was on a preaching tour, and they fell into the hands of the Philistines. At one town the mob tore Harris' coat from his back, pulled off his wig, and pelted him and Seward with

apples, dirt and stones. At another place rotten eggs were thrown at them. Seward was struck in the eye, and after a few days he lost the sight of it. At a third place, as they went on preaching, they met like treatment, but as the eggs, dirt and stones flew around, Seward cried out, "Better endure this than hell." At a place called Hay a villain struck him on the head. The blow was fatal. He died a martyr at the age of thirty-eight.

Amid all these scenes the word reached the hearts of multitudes with great and saving power. While Wesley was preaching at Hemmington, he was accosted by a poor old sinner of eighty years notorious for his wickedness, who came up to him, caught him by the hand, and said, "Whether thou art a good or a bad man, I know not; but I know the words thou speakest are good. I never heard the like in all my life. O that God would send them home upon *my* poor soul." He then burst into tears, and could speak no more. On another occasion, while he was preaching at Short's Gardens in London, the rabble brought an ox, which they tried to drive through the crowd, but the ox ran round and round, one way and another, until he broke away from them and ran off, while the Methodists went on with their meeting.

Wesley not only preached, but he saw and rejoiced in the fruit of his preaching. One of his most faithful and devoted female band leaders fell sick; her patience and fortitude were such as to convince the sinner in whose house she lay ill of the power of the gospel.

Wesley came to see her, and as he entered the room she stretched out her hand and exclaimed:

"Art thou come, thou blessed of the Lord? Praised be the name of God for this."

Wesley said, "Do you faint, now you are chastened of him?"

“O no,” she replied, “no, no ; I faint not ; I murmur not ; I rejoice evermore.”

“But,” said Wesley, “can you in everything give thanks?”

“Yes ; I do, I do,” said the dying saint.

Said Wesley, “God will make all your bed in your sickness.”

She replied, “He does, he does ; I have nothing to desire ; he is ever with me, and I have nothing to do but to praise him.”

Thus in peace and joy she remained until the gates were opened and she entered the celestial city.

Wesley was not without backsliders as well as earnest and faithful Christians in his Societies. At Kingswood he had trouble with some who had lost their first love and fallen into sin. He was compelled to enforce discipline ; several members were expelled. We give the form of the expelling act. After reciting the offences, he says, “I, John Wesley, by the consent and approbation of the band society in Kingswood, do declare the persons above mentioned to be no longer members thereof. Neither will they be so accounted until they shall openly confess their fault, and thereby do what in them lies, to remove the scandal they have given.”

It will be noticed that this expulsion is not upon the sole authority of John Wesley, but by the “consent and approbation of the Society.” The result of this trouble was that John Cennick and about fifty members broke off from Wesley ; this was the first schism in Methodism.

“The enemies of Wesley tried hard to make a breach between him and Whitefield, and in their efforts to do it made many misstatements. It seems that Whitefield wrote to Wesley in regard to the adornments of some of the chief preaching places, and the fine lodging rooms

which he had fitted up for himself at Bristol and other places. The reader must be amused at Wesley's answer. "'The society room at Bristol,' you say, 'is adorned.' How? Why, with a piece of green cloth nailed to the desk; and two sconces for eight candles each in the middle. But 'lodgings are made for me and my brother.' That is, in plain English, there is a little room in the school, where I speak to the persons who come to me; and a garret, in which a bed is placed for me." Such were the rich adornings of Wesley's preaching houses, and of his own sleeping apartments.

The zeal of Whitefield, who was an ardent Calvinist, led him to publish a pamphlet in which he spoke improperly of Wesley; he soon became convinced that he had done his friend a wrong, and begged his pardon. The zeal of Whitefield was not imitated by Wesley. He believed and preached general redemption; but raised no objection to his friend for preaching election and its consequences. One of his friends urged him to reply to Whitefield's pamphlet. He replied, "You may read Whitefield against Wesley; but you shall never read Wesley against Whitefield."

In private Wesley opposed the views of his friend, but never in public. Once the two met in a large social gathering, and Whitefield spoke earnestly in favor of his peculiar views.

Wesley was quiet until the company dispersed, and then said:

"Brother, are you aware of what you have done to-night?"

"Yes," said Whitefield, "I have defended truth."

"You have tried to prove," said Wesley, "that God is worse than the devil; for the devil can only *tempt* a man to sin; but, if what you have said be true, God *forces* a

man to sin; and therefore, on your own system, God is worse than the devil."

Of course, with views so opposite, they could not continue to address the same congregations, and they separated, Whitefield flying like an angel over England and across the ocean to preach the truth as he believed it, and Wesley, no less active and earnest, though more calm and systematic, went on in his work of preaching the gospel and organizing societies.

The first thing that he did after separating from the Moravians and Whitefield was to purge his Societies and to organize them on a more efficient plan. He would take an account of every person against whom a reasonable objection was laid, and if possible bring the accused and the accuser face to face. Many were put on trial again, and some withdrew from the Societies. By this course the Society in Bristol lost forty members. In London, where he also carefully sifted the wheat from the chaff, the Society was reduced to a thousand members. Wesley, learning that many of the Society were in need of food and clothing, appointed twelve persons to visit every alternate day, and to provide what was needful for the sick. These visitors were to meet once a week and give an account of their work, and to lay plans for the future. Women out of work he proposed to employ in knitting, giving them the usual price for their work. To help him in this, he asked all the members who were able, to give a penny a week, and also to give any clothing they did not need for their own use. We see from this that Wesley had laymen to help him in preaching, exhorting and visiting the poor and sick. Wherever he found talent, he used it in extending Christ's kingdom.

CHAPTER VI.

ABOUT THIS TIME (1741) he began to administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper to his members. Usually the Methodists received the sacrament in the parish churches, but in the autumn of this year Wesley was kindly offered the use of a small church in Hermitage street by Mr. Deleznot, the pastor, and here he administered the Supper to the whole Society, consisting of a thousand members. To the members he gave tickets, on which he simply wrote the bearer's name, and this he said was as strong a recommendation as if he had written at length, "I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteousness." These tickets were changed every quarter, and if no new ticket was given to a person, it was known that he was no longer regarded as a member of the Society. "The earliest of these tickets," says Mr. Tyerman, who has a collection of them among other Methodist curiosities, "were wood and copper-plate engravings, printed on card board without any text of Scripture: some bear the emblem of an angel flying in the clouds of heaven, with one trumpet to his mouth, and a second in his hand; and others of the Sun of Righteousness shining on a phoenix rising out of fire. Some have a dove encircled in glory; others have no engraving, but simply an inscription written by Chas. Wesley, 'August, 1746.' Some merely had the word 'Society' imprinted, with the member's name written underneath; others have a lamb carrying a flag; and others a tree with a broken stem, Jehovah as a sun shining on it, and at its foot two men, one planting a new cutting,

and the other watering one already planted. Some represent Christ in the clouds of heaven, with the cross in one hand, and a crown in the other; and others represent the Christian kneeling before an altar, inscribed with the words, 'Pray always and faint not.' Some bear the image of old father Time, hurrying along, with a scroll in his hand, inscribed with, "Now is the accepted time." These tickets were printed in black, red, or blue ink. After a few years texts of Scripture were used on them in the place of emblems, and are continued to this time. The use of the quarterly ticket is still continued among the Wesleyans in England, but in this country we believe the practice has been everywhere abandoned.

Methodism was able to attest at this early period that its faithful members died well. One dying said "I never felt such love before; I love every soul. I am all love, and so is God." Another, in the midst of great pain, sang hymns at the time, and in the midst of bodily agony exclaimed, "Though I groan, I feel no pain at all, Christ so rejoices and fills my heart." The last words of another were, "Death stares me in the face, but I fear him not." Hannah Richardson of Bristol, who was followed to her grave by all the members, the mob pelting the procession with stones and dirt as it moved along, said, "I have no fear, no doubt, no trouble. Heaven is open! I see Jesus Christ with all His angels and saints in white. I see what I cannot utter or express."

The scenes that occurred at the open air preaching of the Methodists will give an idea of what the preachers had to suffer from the furious mobs that roared around them like bulls of Bashan. John Cennick in one place had hog's wash and fetid water thrown over him and his congregation for an hour and a half, who all the while re-

mained still in secret prayer. At a place called Stratton a mob came yelling, and used their clubs freely upon the people. Some were cut over their heads and the blood streamed down their faces. Women were seized and dragged away by the hair. The mob bellowed and roared like madmen. But Cennick kept on preaching until they caught him and pulled him down. He and his friends then set out on foot for another village while the mob followed bawling, "You cheating dog, you pocketing rogue, sell us a half penny ballad!" Besides this treatment from the ignorant and besotted rabble, Methodism had to meet and endure the ridicule of the leading fashionable newspapers of the day. Slanders of the most shameful sort were published against Wesley and his associates. It was reported that he had been fined one hundred dollars for selling Geneva gin, that he was a papist and kept two priests in his house, that he received large sums of money from Spain, and that he was getting ready to join the Spaniards with twenty thousand men as soon as they landed in England. Such stories as these were told, and were believed by multitudes of people. But in the midst of ridicule from the genteel sinners, and of blows and curses from the brutal mobs, Wesley went steadily on with his work.

He saw the field widening around him, and he felt the need of more men to help him. These God soon raised up. Cennick and Humphreys had forsaken him, but others came in their stead. John Nelson, the stone mason, came to London looking for work, fell in with the Methodists, and was converted. He became one of the most famous of Wesley's lay preachers. Thomas Maxfield, converted at Bristol, and who attended for a time on Charles Wesley as a servant, being left a while in London, met the Society at the Foundery, and from

praying and exhorting was led on to preaching. His sermons were powerful, and many were convicted and converted. When Wesley heard of this he hurried back to London to stop Maxfield. Speaking of it to his mother, who lived in his house, she said to him, "John, take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him yourself."

The Countess of Huntingdon, a member of the English nobility, and one of the elect ladies of Methodism, wrote of Maxfield, "He is one of the greatest instances of God's peculiar favor that I know. He is my astonishment. The first time I made him expound, I expected little from him; but, before he had gone over one-fifth part of his discourse, my attention was rivetted, and I was immovable. His power in prayer also is very extraordinary."

Wesley was satisfied; the testimony of two such women as his mother and Lady Huntingdon, with what he heard and saw, settled the question of sending out lay preachers.

Wesley made out a strong case in favor of his course. He says that after God had used him and his brother in turning many from their sinful lives, the ministers of the Church, instead of gladly joining with them in the work, spoke of them "as if the devil, not God had sent them; and represented them as fellows not fit to live—papists, heretics, traitors, conspirators against their king and country." They actually drove the people converted under the ministry of the Wesleys from the Lord's table, and openly cursed them "in the name of God." Wesley well asked, "In a case like this, what could be done? No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that

remained was, to find some one among themselves, who was upright of heart, and of sound judgment in the things of God; and to desire him to meet the rest as often as he could, in order to confirm, as he was able, in the ways of God, either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation.' Thus in the open path of Providence Wesley walked, and God's blessing rested upon him and the men that helped him. By these unlettered men the Societies were confirmed in the faith, and many sinners were converted from the error of their ways. Wesley says, "This plain account of the whole proceeding, I take to be the best defence of it. I know of no Scripture which forbids making use of such help, in a case of such necessity. And I praise God who has given even this help to these poor sheep when 'their own shepherds pitied them not.'"

In further reply to those who opposed the use of lay preachers, Wesley said: "I am bold to affirm that these unlettered men have help from God for the great work of saving souls from death. But, indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the university, are able to do."

Wesley held and proved that ordination is not a necessary prerequisite of preaching. He called attention to the fact that many of those who helped forward the Reformation of Luther were laymen, and showed that all the Reformed churches of Europe permitted men to preach before they were ordained. And this practice they based on the words of Paul, "Let these first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon being found blameless."

It is a noticeable fact that in the very Church from which such violent hostility arose against Wesley for sending out lay preachers, this practice has been accepted. In May, 1869, Dr. Jackson, Bishop of London, in the Established Church of England, formally authorized eight laymen "to read prayers, and to read and explain the Holy Scriptures," and "to conduct religious services for the poor in schools, and mission rooms, and in the open air"—precisely the sort of work that Wesley's lay preachers engaged in more than a hundred and twenty years before Dr. Jackson's day.

What a vindication of the wisdom of Wesley in his plans for the spread of the gospel among all classes! Well had it been for the Church of England, if, instead of ridiculing and casting him out, the great body of the Bishops and clergy had joined him in the work of reforming the morals and manners of the kingdom.

Wesley was an itinerant in the widest sense. The record of his labors shows his diligence. He spent twenty-four weeks in London, fourteen in Bristol, one in Wales, thirteen in preaching tours to other parts of England. In his journeyings he met with Whitefield. Such loving and ardent souls could not be kept apart by speculative views of theology. Wesley says, "I spent an agreeable hour with Mr. Whitefield. I believe he is sincere in all he says concerning his earnest desire of joining hand in hand with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ. But if, as some would persuade me, he is not, the loss is all on his side. I am just as I was. I go my way, whether he goes with me or stays behind."

It was soon after this interview that Whitefield had one of his grand preaching seasons in Moorfields, London. It was Easter, and to this vast common people of all classes flocked to see the shows. On all sides were

mountebanks, fiddlers, drummers, trumpeters, and showmen of all kinds. Whitefield mounted his pulpit in the midst of twenty thousand people. He was instantly made a target for dirt, stones, dead cats and rotten eggs. A fellow who played the fool in a puppet show tried to lash him with a whip; a recruiting sergeant with drum and fife marched through the congregation; but none of these could stop the zealous preacher; for three hours he kept on preaching, praying and singing, and when he left the ground as a victor his pockets were full of notes from people asking him to pray for them. These he read when he reached the Tabernacle amid the praises and shouts of the vast crowd. A thousand such papers were handed in, and three hundred and fifty persons were received into the church in a single day as the fruit of this Moorfield's service.

Whitefield and Wesley differed widely as the poles in their creeds, but in heart and aim they were one. "Mr. Wesley," said Whitefield, "I think, is wrong in some things; but I believe he will shine bright in glory." Again in a letter to Wesley he says, "I thank you, dear sir, for praying for me. I have been upon my knees praying for you and yours, and that nothing but love, lowliness and simplicity may be among us."

Wesley reciprocated all the loving words of Whitefield and others who differed from the Methodists in doctrine. To that most zealous and useful man, Howell Harris, he wrote, "Brother, is thy heart with mine, as my heart is with thine? If it be, give me thy hand. I am indeed a poor, foolish, sinful worm; and how long my Lord will use me, I know not. I sometimes think the time is coming when He will lay me aside. For surely never before did he send such a laborer into such a harvest. But, so long as I am continued in the work,

let us rise together against the evil-doers; let us not weaken, but strengthen one another's hands in God. My brother, my soul is gone forth to meet thee; let us fall upon one another's neck. The good Lord blot out all that is past, and let there henceforward be peace between me and thee." Such was the Christian spirit in which the early Methodist preachers went to their work. Is it strange that God put his seal upon the hearts and the work of such men?

The year 1739 is usually given as the time of the rise of the Methodist Societies, but they were in fact more Moravian than Methodistic. It was not until 1742 that they were divided into classes and had regular organizations. The Methodists in London numbered about eleven hundred. Up to this time, Wesley and his brother had been the preachers and the pastors of their little flocks, but now providentially an alteration was made in their plans which gave more life to Methodism than any other feature of the system, if we except the preaching of the gospel.

Wesley had built a meeting house in Bristol; a debt was due upon it, and the poor preacher and his poor members knew not how to raise the money. The leading men met to consult about this debt. After some talk, one of them said, "Let every member of the Society give a penny a week till the debt is paid." Another replied, "Many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it." "Then," said the first speaker, "put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give anything, well; I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbors weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." "It was done," says Wesley, "and in a while, some of

these informed me, they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, 'This is the thing, the very thing, we have wanted so long.'

Out of this came Methodist class meetings. The collectors while they gathered the pennies were desired by Wesley to make inquiry into the behavior and spiritual condition of the members. They did so, and disorderly persons were arrested and the Societies purged. Wesley went to London and tried the same plan with success. He appointed as leaders "those in whom he could most confide," and thus the class meeting became a part of the system of Methodism. "This," says Wesley, "was the origin of our classes, for which I can never sufficiently praise God; the unspeakable usefulness of the institution having ever since been more and more manifest." This testimony Methodists should well ponder. At first it was the custom of the class leaders to visit each member at his house, but this was found not to work well. It was soon agreed that a suitable place should be selected where the leader could meet all his members together once a week. The leader opened and closed the meetings with singing and prayer, and conversed with each person on the subject of personal religion.

Wesley rejoiced over these little social meetings as over hid treasure of priceless value. "It can scarce be conceived," he writes, "what advantages have been reaped by this little providential regulation. Many now experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to bear one another's burdens, and patiently to care for each other's welfare. And as they had daily a more intimate acquaintance, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. Upon reflection, I could not but observe,

this is the very thing which was from the beginning of Christianity. As soon as any Jews or heathen were so convinced of the truth as to forsake sin and seek the gospel of salvation, the first preachers immediately joined them together; took account of their names; advised them to watch over each other; and met these *catechumens*, as they were then called, apart from the great congregation, that they might instruct, rebuke, exhort, and pray with them and for them according to their several necessities."

It may surprise the reader to learn that these meetings met with opposition from many of the Methodists. Some of the older members regarded them not as a privilege but a restraint. Wesley replied that he regarded class meetings not as essential, nor of Divine institution, but as providential helps which he was sorry they had not used from the first. "We are always open to instruction," he said, "willing to be wiser every day than we were before, and to change whatever we can change for the better." But others objected, "There is no Scripture for classes." Wesley answered that there was no Scripture against them, and that in fact there were texts which enjoined upon Christians the substance of the thing, leaving the circumstances to be determined by reason and experience. The most plausible objection was very much the same we now hear. "The thing is well enough in itself; but the leaders have neither gifts nor graces for such work." Wesley replied—"1. Yet such leaders as they are, it is plain God has blessed their labor. 2. If any of these is remarkably wanting in gifts or grace, he is soon taken notice of and removed. 3. If you know any such, tell it to me, not to others, and I will endeavor to exchange him for a better. 4. It may be hoped they will all be better than they are,

both by experience and observation, and by the advices given them by the minister every Tuesday night, and by the prayers (then in particular) offered up for them." The selection of proper leaders was a work of care and labor. "As the Society increased," says Wesley, "I found it required still greater care to separate the precious from the vile. In order to this, I determined, at least once in every three months, to talk with every member myself, and to inquire at their own mouths, whether they grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. At these seasons, I likewise particularly inquire whether there be any misunderstanding or difference among them; that every hindrance of peace and brotherly love may be taken out of the way." The class meetings were a source of great power to Methodism. The leaders watched over their classes with constant vigilance; the members watched over one another, and all strove to grow up in the knowledge and love of God. Many of the greatest and best men of the Methodist Church in England and America were trained in the class room; and it has been remarked that the Societies in which class meetings have been kept up have had a spiritual life more peaceful, joyous, and fruitful, than that of those who have failed to use this means of grace.

One of the most zealous lay preachers of Methodism was John Nelson, whom we have already named as one of the converts at London. Returning to his home in Yorkshire, he began to preach among his wicked countrymen; and had the joy of seeing many of the worst classes converted. Wesley went to the aid of his faithful co-laborer. On reaching Birstal, the place where Nelson lived, he stopped at an inn and sent for Nelson to come to him. Wesley went with him to his humble

cottage, and was as much at his ease in the midst of poverty as he had been in the fine mansion of Lady Huntingdon, from which he came to the home of John Nelson. Wesley preached at Birstal, and had a convert whose name is worthy of record among the heroes of Methodism. Nathaniel Harris felt the word Wesley brought to be from God. He embraced the faith in the face of brutal persecution, and was steadfast through a life of eighty years. His father turned him out of his house, his brother horsewhipped him, the mob hurled stones at him, and his blood was spattered on some of his persecutors. But he held fast his faith to the end of life; he was a joyful Methodist, and one of his sayings was, "My soul is always on the wing, I only wait the summons."

From Birstal Wesley went to Newcastle on Tyne. This place became famous as one of the strongholds of Methodism in the North of England. But now on the first visit of Wesley it was most unpromising. On reaching the town, he walked out after tea, and was shocked at the open sinfulness of the people. They were drinking and swearing, and among them were little children whose mouths were full of curses and bad words. On Sunday Wesley took his stand near a pump in one of the worst parts of the town, and he and John Taylor began the service by singing the old hundredth psalm and tune. A few persons soon came out to see what was the matter; then came others, and others still, until Wesley had a crowd of more than a thousand hearers. When the sermon was ended, the people stood gaping at him in great astonishment. Wesley said to them: "If you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God's help, I design to preach here again." Many of those who heard his first

sermon were sailors, and were used, says one, to "the language of hell, as though they had received a liberal education in the regions of woe." The text from which Wesley preached to these poor outcasts was, "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

The next day at 5 o'clock in the evening Wesley took his stand on the slope of a hill in the town and preached again to many thousands. "After preaching," he says, "the poor people were ready to tread me under foot, out of pure love and kindness." He went next day eighty miles to Birstal, where, in the midst of a vast multitude, he conducted religious services for two hours and a half.

CHAPTER VII.

A FEW DAYS after the incidents related in the last chapter, we find Wesley again at Epworth. He put up at the inn where an old servant of his father's family and two or three poor women met him.

The next day was Sunday, and he sent word to the curate, offering to assist him in the service, either by preaching or reading prayers. The curate declined his offer, and showed his rudeness by preaching a sermon against enthusiasts, with special reference to the Methodists. As the people were coming out of church, John Taylor gave notice that Mr. John Wesley, not being allowed to preach in the church, would preach in the church yard at 6 o'clock. At that hour Wesley appeared, and taking his stand on the tombstone of his father, preached to the largest crowd ever assembled at Epworth. The scene was deeply solemn. The living son preaching above the dust of his dead father, because the bigoted parish priest would not allow him the use of his dead father's church! "I am well assured," says Wesley, "that I did far more good to my Lincolnshire parishioners by preaching three days on my father's tomb, than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit."

But he preached more than three sermons from this strange pulpit. Eight days he staid at Epworth, and every night the tombstone was his pulpit, while around thousands stood silent and awe-struck.

He preached at many other towns in this region. At Belton the little Society had felt the heavy hand of persecution. Some of the leaders of the mob took a whole

wagon-load of Methodists to the magistrate. He asked what they had done. For some time there was silence. At length one said, "They pretend to be better than other people, and pray from morning till night;" another said, "They have *converted* my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue! and now she is as quiet as a lamb!" "Take them back, take them back," said the justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town."

The sermons of Wesley from his father's tomb were attended with amazing power. The people wept aloud. Some fell down suddenly as if dead. Often the preacher's voice was drowned by the cries of penitents. One man, who had not heard a sermon for thirty years, stood like a statue. "Sir," said Wesley to him, "are you a sinner?" "Sinner enough!" said the poor man, staring upwards, till his wife and servant, both weeping, put him into his carriage and took him home.

While Wesley was preaching at Epworth, where his father labored and struggled for nearly forty years, his honored mother, who had reared there a noble family of children, was nearing the gates of death. Hearing of her sickness, he came at once to London. Her five daughters were with her. Wesley says, "I found my mother on the borders of eternity; but she had no doubt or fear; nor any desire but to depart and to be with Christ." She died of an attack of gout on Friday, July 23, 1742. Awaking early in the morning, she said, "My dear Saviour! Art Thou come to help me at my last extremity?" In the afternoon, when service was over at the Foundery, Wesley came in and found her cold and almost pulseless. Just before she lost the power of speech, she said: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a hymn of praise to God."

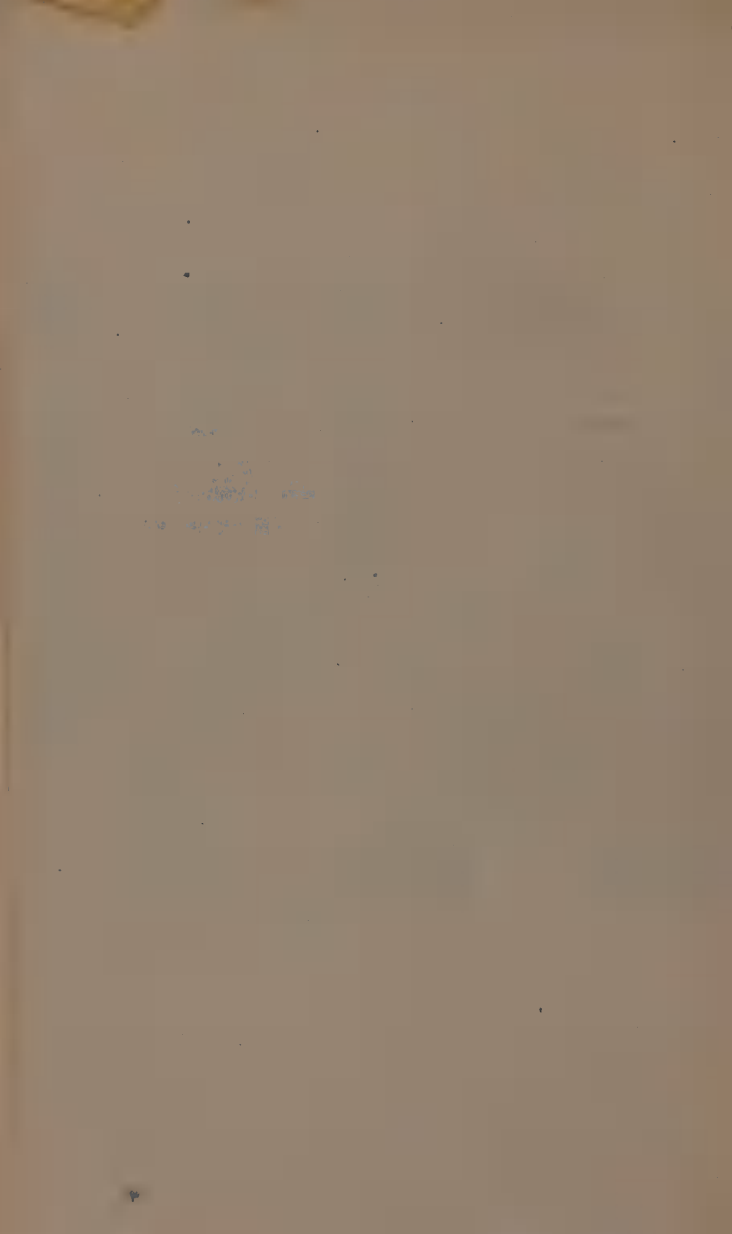
This holy woman was buried August 1st in Bunhill-fields. A great multitude was present. Wesley conducted the funeral services, and then preached from the words: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." "It was," says Wesley, "one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see this side eternity."

The power that now began to attend the preaching of the Wesleys, and particularly of John, was truly wonderful. It was not an unusual thing for persons to fall under his preaching as if they had been shot dead; and even the gentry, as they were called, were often so soundly convicted of sin as to cry aloud for pardon and peace. Wesley went north to Newcastle and found that since he first preached near the town-pump the word of God had greatly multiplied. In eight months eight hundred had joined the Society. It was decided to have a chapel; a site was bought and the corner-stone laid amidst the rejoicings of the people. Wesley was compelled to stop several times during his sermon that the people might offer prayer and thanksgiving to God for his goodness. The building was to cost \$3,500—Wesley had just five dollars of this sum when the foundation-stone was laid. Many said it could never be finished. But Wesley was of another mind. As the house was begun for God's sake, he believed "He would provide what was needful for the finishing it."

This was the largest meeting house in England, and



Tomb of Mrs. Wesley



it became famous as a center of 'Methodist influence. Here one of the earliest Sunday Schools was established, in which a thousand children were taught the way of life. Here a Bible Society was formed before the British and Foreign Bible Society had an existence. Here they had one of the best choirs in England, and among these Methodist singers were two young men that afterward became the English Lords Eldon and Stowell. Here in this great chapel colliers and boatmen from the country around would gather, and after the evening service sleep on the benches until they were aroused at 5 o'clock the next morning to hear Wesley preach. This was the headquarters of Methodism in the north of England.

Three months after the house was begun, and while it was yet incomplete, and in the severe month of March, Wesley opened it with a sermon on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He also held a watch night "amid bricks, mortar, and a builder's usual *debris*, the light of a full moon probably being the only illumination the damp, cold, unfinished building had, and equinoctial gales and winter winds wafting the hymns of these happy Methodists to a higher and holier world than this. Truly the cradle in which Methodism was rocked by the hand of Providence was often rough."

While Methodism was planting churches on earth, souls were going joyfully from her earthly courts to the company of the saints in heaven. One holy woman died crying out, "It is doné, it is done! Christ lives in me." Another bade her friends farewell, saying, "I fear not death; it hath no sting for me. I shall live forevermore." A little boy of thirteen threw his arms wide open and died saying, "Come, come, Lord Jesus! I am Thine."

Of course where there was so much fine gold there was

some dross. Some members of the Societies showed signs of fanaticism. Wesley rebuked them, and denounced their follies. Two men came to him in London calling themselves prophets, and saying "that they were sent from God to say that he would shortly be *born'd* again; and that, unless he turned them out, they would stay in the house till it was done." Wesley knew well how to deal with such cases. He told them he would not turn them out, and took them down stairs into the room of the Society. Here he left them. "It was tolerably cold," he says, with rather severe humor, "and they had neither meat nor drink. However, they sat from morning to evening, when they quietly went away, and I have heard nothing more from them since."

The mob violence against the Methodists continued with increasing furiousness. While Wesley was preaching in the neighborhood of White Chapel, a volley of stones was thrown at him, one of which struck him between the eyes, drawing the blood; he quietly wiped the blood from his face and went on with his sermon. At Cardiff, while Charles Wesley was preaching, the women were kicked; rockets were thrown into the room, setting fire to the clothing of the people; the desk in which the preacher stood was broken to pieces, and the Bible wrested from his hands. One of the mob declared "that if he went straight to hell for doing it, he would persecute the Methodists to his dying day."

The Wesleys were fond of singing, and were both fine poets. They freely circulated hymns among their Societies, with proper tunes to be used in social and public worship, and the Methodists became a singing people. More than six thousand hymns were put in circulation during Wesley's lifetime, and most of them were from the heart and pen of his brother Charles. The direc-

tions given to his preachers show how highly he prized good, hearty, lively singing, not by a select few in a choir loft, but by the whole congregation of worshippers. He said: "Suit the tune to the words. Avoid complex tunes, which it is scarcely possible to sing with devotion. Repeating the same words so often, [a very fashionable style now,] especially while another repeats different words, shocks all common sense, necessarily brings in dead formality, and has no more religion in it than a Lancashire hornpipe. Sing no anthems. Do not suffer the people to sing too slow. In every Society, let them learn to sing; and let them always learn our own tunes first. Let the women constantly sing their part alone. Let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes, and sings the bass as it is pricked down in the book. Introduce no new tunes till they are perfect in the old. Let no organ be placed anywhere, till proposed in the Conference. Recommend our tune-book everywhere; and if you cannot sing yourself, choose a person or two in each place to pitch the tune for you. Exhort every one in the congregation to sing, not one in ten only." Such were Wesley's rules for this part of divine worship, and under them the singing of Methodism was a power next to preaching, praying and holy living.

We cannot do better than to quote the sensible and timely words of Mr. Tyerman on this point, and commend them to the earnest consideration of our preachers and people.

"Well would it be if Methodist ministers were to enforce such rules as these instead of leaving the most beautiful part of public worship, as is too often done, to the irreligious whims and criminal caprice of organists and choirs. No one can doubt the fact that, within the last forty years, the singing in Methodist chapels has

deteriorated to an extent which ought to be alarming. [Is not this true of America as well as of England?] The tunes now too generally sung are intolerably insipid; and, as to any sympathy between them and the inspiring hymns of Charles Wesley, it would be preposterous to say that a particle of such sympathy exists. Such singing may suit the *classic* taste of fashionable congregations assembled amid the chilling influences of gothic decorations; but it bears no resemblance whatever to the general outbursts of heartfelt praise, adoration, and thanksgiving, which characterized the old Methodists. It is high time for Methodist preachers to keep John Wesley's rules respecting singing; to substitute John Wesley's tunes and others like them for the soulless sounds now called classic music; and to feel that, before God and man, they are as much responsible for the singing in sanctuaries as they are for that part of public worship which consists of prayer."

The vigilance of Wesley in guarding the purity of his Societies was one secret of his wonderful success. On one of his visits to Newcastle, he found the Society injured in its life and influence by unworthy members. Sixty-four were expelled. Among other offences, we find that one was expelled for laziness, and twenty-nine for lightness and carelessness. In a few months after it was formed, he had purged this famous Society of one hundred and forty members. Wesley required that all who joined his Societies should live up to the rules or go out of them. By his rigid discipline he reduced the numbers in many places, but he increased the life and moral power of those who were faithful.

We have already seen that Wesley had been refused the use of his father's pulpit at Epworth; he was to suffer a still greater indignity at the hands of the notorious

curate, Mr. Romley. On one of his wide circuits he came to Epworth, and again took his father's tombstone for his pulpit. It was sacramental Sunday, and some of the people asked permission of the curate to receive the holy communion. The proud man replied: "Tell Mr. Wesley I shall not give *him* the sacrament; for he is not *fit*." Wesley says of this act: "How wise a God is our God! There could not have been so fit a place under heaven, where this should befall me first, as my father's house, the place of my nativity, and the very place where, 'according to the straitest sect of our religion,' I had so long 'lived a Pharisee.' It was also fit, in the highest degree, that he who repelled me from that very table where I had myself so often distributed the bread of life, should be one who owed his all in this world to the tender love which my father had shown to his, as well as personally to himself."

Perhaps the most violent treatment ever met with by ministers of Christ in modern times was endured by the Wesleys and their fellow laborers in Staffordshire. John Wesley said of the furious violence of the mobs: "I was not surprised at all; neither should I have wondered if, after the advices they had so often received from the pulpit, as well as from the episcopal chair, the zealous churchmen had rose and cut all that were Methodists to pieces."

Wesley at once set out for the scene of violence, and in a few days was in the very midst of the maddened, howling, cursing mobs. At Wednesbury he met a crowd as furious as lions. At noon he preached without disturbance, but in the afternoon, as he sat writing in the house of Francis Ward, the mob rushed to the house crying, "Bring out the minister, we will have the minister!" Wesley was calm and asked that some of the

most furious should come into his room. Three men entered, and, after talking to them a few moments, they became perfectly quiet. With these men before him to clear his way, Wesley went out and took his stand in the midst of the surging mass. He asked them what they wanted with him. They said, "We want you to go to the justice." Wesley said, "That I will with all my heart." The crowd moved off with him, and soon came to the house of the magistrate two miles distant. Some ran ahead to tell the officer that the mob was bringing Wesley. He replied, "What have I to do with Wesley? Take him back again." Soon the crowd with Wesley in the midst came up and began knocking at the door. The justice refused to see them, but sent his son to ask their business. One of the leaders answered, "To be plain, sir, if I must speak the truth, all the fault I find with him is, that he preaches better than our parsons." Another man said, "Sir, it is a downright shame; he makes people rise at five in the morning to sing psalms. What advice would your worship give us?" "Go home," said the young man, "and be quiet." Failing here, they hurried Wesley away to another magistrate. It was now late in the evening, and the second officer refused to see them. They had now to go back again, and while about fifty were conveying Wesley to his lodgings they were overtaken by a mob from Walsal, who pelted the escort till nearly every one ran off leaving Wesley in the hands of the ruffians. Some caught him by the collar and tried to pull him down; a big fellow behind him struck him several blows with a club. Another rushed through the crowd to help his cruel mate and lifted his arm to strike, but suddenly let it drop, and, stroking Wesley's head, said, "What soft hair he has!" One man hit him on the breast, another on the mouth so hard that the blood

gushed out. He was dragged to Walsal, and seeing the door of a large house open, he attempted to enter it, but was seized by the hair and dragged backward. The mob then paraded through the streets with him. At length, when they halted a moment, Wesley asked, "Are you willing to hear me speak?" They cried, "No, no! knock out his brains; down with him; kill him at once!" Wesley said, "What evil have I done? Which of you all have I wronged in word or deed?" To this they only shouted, "Bring him away, bring him away!" Wesley now began to pray. While thus engaged a man who had headed the mob just before, turned and said to him, "Sir, I will spend my life for you: follow me, and no one shall hurt a hair of your head." Two or three others joined him, and one of them, a noted prize-fighter, took Wesley up and carried him safely through the crowd. Of this scene Wesley wrote: "A little before ten o'clock God brought me safe to Wednesbury; having lost only one flap of my waistcoat, and a little skin from one of my hands. From the beginning to the end I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my own study. But I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind that, if they should throw me into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket. For myself, I did not doubt but I should swim across, having but a thin coat and a light pair of boots."

Five days after this rough handling of John, Charles Wesley came into the midst of the lions. He found the Methodists steadfast in the faith in the face of their enemies. He says, "We sung praises lustily and with a good courage; and could all set our seal to the truth of our Lord's saying, "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake." The leader of the mob against

John Wesley was so struck with his meek behavior and Christian spirit, that when Charles came to his town he forsook his bad associates and came forward and joined the people whom he had persecuted.

"What did you think of my brother?" said Charles to him. "I think of him!" said he, "I thought he is a *man* of God; and God was on his side, when so *many* of us could not kill one *man*."

This person, whose name was George Clifton, lived to a great age, and was never tired of telling how God held back his hand when he wanted to kill Wesley.

The fury of the mobs against the Methodists did not abate when the Wesleys left the scene to preach the gospel in other places. The houses of the Methodists were boldly entered by ruffians armed with clubs, axes and swords. Furniture was broken up, feather beds ripped open and the contents scattered over the rooms and in the yards. Bibles were chopped to pieces, and those who owned them beaten in the most cruel manner. The Methodists made application for protection to three different magistrates, but without obtaining protection or redress. But though man failed them, God did not. "We keep meeting together morning and evening," they wrote, "are in great peace and love with each other, and are nothing terrified by our adversaries. God grant we may endure to the end."

Cornwall was a part of England in which the Methodists did a great work, and where at the first they met with mob violence equal to that already noticed. The people were sunk in ignorance and vice, and it was among such that Methodism gained her brightest jewels. When the Wesleys first went to this region, there was one village in which it is said there was not a single copy

of the Bible, and but one copy of the Book of Common Prayer, which was kept at the tavern.

On one occasion, when a great storm made the people fear the day of judgment had come, many of them rushed to the tavern to get the bar-keeper to read them a prayer. Tom, the bar-keeper, snatched up a book and began to read about storms and wrecks and the terrors of the ocean, when his mistress called out, "Tom, that is not the Prayer-Book; it is Robin Crusoe!" "No," he replied, "it is the Prayer-Book;" and on he went reading as fast as he could until he came to a passage about man Friday, when his mistress again screamed out to him that he was reading Robin Crusoe. "Well," said Tom, "what if I am, there are as good prayers in Robin Crusoe as in any other book;" and so he went on till the storm abated and the frightened people went home.

At St. Ives, the parson of the church set an example to the mobs by preaching a sermon against the Methodists, in which he called them "seducers, troublers, scribes, pharisees and hypocrites."

Charles Wesley went to church, and heard a parson deliver such "a hotch-potch of railing and foolish lies as might have made the devil blush." Charles told the preacher he had been misinformed. His reverence replied, "You are a liar," and walked away. The next day Charles went to the market-house and began to sing. The mob gathered and began to beat a drum and shout. A few days after, as he began to preach, a band of ruffians rushed upon the people and threatened to kill them. The windows, shutters and benches were broken. They swore that Wesley should not preach there and raised their clubs to strike him. The women were beaten and dragged about the room and trod upon by the brutal wretches. They at last fell to fighting each other and

then left the room. On another preaching day, the mob rushed into the room throwing dirt, stones and rotten eggs, and swearing they would pull the house to pieces. Such were the scenes in the midst of which Methodism was introduced into Cornwall.

John Wesley came with John Nelson to aid in the work which Charles had begun. They had a hard time and endured severe trials. Nelson worked at his trade as a stone mason and preached whenever he could gather a congregation. Wesley and Nelson often had to sleep on the bare floor; one night, when they had had no other bed for two weeks, Wesley turned over, and slapping Nelson on the side, said, "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer, for the skin is off but one side yet." They preached constantly, but very few persons asked them to eat a morsel of food. One day as they were riding along after preaching, Wesley stopped his horse to pick blackberries, and said, "Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful there are plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting an appetite, but the worst for getting food."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WESLEYS were not merely zealous preachers, they were also faithful pastors. In visiting the members in the London Societies, the two spent twelve hours a day until they had seen every member and learned his spiritual condition. So important did they regard such work that John said: "I cannot understand how any minister can hope ever to give up his account with joy unless (as Ignatius advises) he knows all his flock by name; not overlooking the men servants and maid servants." The number of members in London had gone above two thousand, and the Foundery was filled to overflowing. Two or three other preaching places were offered to Wesley, which he gladly accepted. One of these was in Southwark, a very wicked part of London, and a zealous woman, on hearing that Wesley was going to preach there, said, "What! will Mr. Wesley preach at Snowfields? Surely not! There is not such another place in London. The people there are not men, but devils!" This was just one of the reasons that made Wesley go there, and he opened the chapel with a sermon from the words, "Jesus said, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Visiting poor and sick persons Wesley looked upon as a great Christian duty. He did not think he had done his work when he had sent them help; he must go and see them in the spirit of the Saviour. Whoever neglected to visit the poor he thought lost a valuable means

of grace. "One great reason," he says, "why the rich have so little sympathy for the poor, is, because they so seldom visit them;" and he adds, "All who desire to escape the everlasting fire, and to inherit the everlasting kingdom, are equally concerned according to their power to practice this important duty." To this blessed work he adhered as long as he lived and personally did a vast amount of it; but it was needful to have helpers in it, and such were at first in London the stewards. The work of these important and valuable church officers, as Wesley laid it out, was to receive the gifts of the people, to distribute them, by paying for repairs to the chapels, and paying other debts and in relieving the helpless sick and poor. The rules Wesley gave his stewards were, to be frugal, to have no long accounts, to give none that asked relief either an ill word or an ill look, and to expect not thanks from man. They met every Thursday morning at six o'clock, and distributed all the money they had received up to the previous Tuesday night, thus closing their accounts within each week. It was soon found that the stewards could not attend to all the sick and poor, and Wesley called for volunteers for this work. Many offered, and out of the number he chose forty-six who seemed to be of a loving, tender spirit. He then divided London into twenty-three districts, and in each one of these two visitors were to visit the sick three times a week; inquire into the state of their souls, relieve their wants, and present their accounts weekly to the stewards. Wesley says of this good work: "Upon reflection, I saw how exactly, in this also, we had copied after the primitive Church. What were the ancient deacons? What was Phœbe, the deaconess, but a visitor of the sick?" He gave his visitors four very plain and simple rules: "Be plain and open in dealing with souls.

Be mild, tender, patient. Be cleanly in all you do for the sick. Be not nice."

After five years' experience in this work Wesley wrote, "We have had great reason to praise God for His continued blessing in this undertaking. Many lives have been saved, many sicknesses healed, much pain and want prevented or removed. Many heavy hearts have been made glad, many mourners comforted; and the visitors have found, from Him whom they serve, a present reward for all their labor."

While Wesley was putting into shape his plans for the relief of his poor members and others who needed aid, the preachers, who went into the towns and villages proclaiming the gospel, were still met and maltreated by mobs who not seldom were urged on by churchmen and sometimes even by ministers of the Established Church. At Sheffield the church ministers so stirred up the mob that they were ready to leap on the Methodists and tear them limb from limb. An officer of the English army presented his sword at Charles Wesley's breast, while the meeting house was pulled down and the windows of a Mr. Bennett's house, in which Wesley lodged, were smashed to pieces. At Hampton the scenes were worse. The mob said they would make aprons out of Whitefield's gown; they broke a young woman's arm, threw a man into a pond of water, and threatened to cast Whitefield into a lime pit. One person was thrown violently into a hole full of reptiles and stagnant water, and women were seized by the hair and dragged down stairs. The Methodists were forced to hide themselves for fear of being murdered outright.

In addition to this, the press teemed with the most abusive and slanderous attacks on the Wesleys and their co-laborers.

Up to this time Wesley had no written rules for his Societies. This year (1743) he drew up a system of rules and submitted them to the Societies. They are substantially the same as the General Rules now in our Book of Discipline.

Among the tracts which Wesley was constantly sending forth, he now sent out one called "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." It made a sensation among the enemies of Methodism; and well it might, for Wesley had given it great sharpness and power. In this work he describes true religion and shows how it is obtained, and then turning upon those who say they believe in the gospel, but live contrary to it, he shows the folly and sinfulness of such lives.

He ably defends himself and his brethren from the foul charges of various kinds which had been made against them. He scouts the charge that he was a money-lover, and shows that he was personally in debt nearly \$4,000 on account of the chapels he had built for the benefit of the poor people who had joined his Societies. He says he had "thrown up his ease, most of his friends, his reputation, and that way of life which of all others was most agreeable both to his natural temper and education; he had toiled day and night, spent all his time and strength, knowingly destroyed a firm constitution, and was hastening into weakness, pain, diseases, death,—to gain a debt of four thousand dollars." He then says to his brother clergymen of the Established Church: "For what price will you preach eighteen or nineteen times every week; and this throughout the year? What shall I give you to travel seven or eight hundred miles, in all weathers, every two or three months? For what salary will you abstain from all other diversions than the doing good, and the praising

God? I am mistaken if you would not prefer strangling to such a life, even with thousands of gold and silver. I will now simply tell you my sense of these matters, whether you will hear or whether you will forbear. Food and raiment I have; such food as I choose to eat, and such raiment as I choose to put on; I have a place where to lay my head; I have what is needful for life and godliness; and I apprehend this is all the world can afford. The kings of the earth can give me no more. For as to gold and silver, I count it dung and dross. I trample it under my feet. I esteem it just as the mire of the streets. I desire it not. I seek it not. I only fear lest any of it should cleave to me, and I should not be able to shake it off before my spirit returns to God. I will take care (God being my helper) that none of the accursed thing shall be found in my tents when the Lord calleth me hence. Hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me; if I leave behind me ten pounds—above my debts and my books, or what may happen to be due on account of them,—you and all mankind may bear witness against me, that I lived and died a thief and a robber.”

Such were the noble words in which Wesley rebuked those who charged him with a desire to make gain by means of the gospel he preached. He kept his word; for, shortly before his death he said he had kept his accounts accurately for many years, but should attempt it no longer, as he was satisfied with the continual conviction “that he saved all he could and gave all he could, that is all he had.”

In 1744 Wesley had his first Conference. It began on June 25, and was held for five days. The persons present were John and Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Henry Piers, Samuel Taylor, and John Meriton. Four of Wes-

ley's lay preachers attended—Thomas Richards, Thomas Maxfield, John Bennet, and John Downes. Of these four, the only one who lived and died a Methodist was Downes; the others broke off from Wesley and joined other Churches. The day before the Conference opened they had preaching, a lovefeast, and a sacramental service, at which nearly three thousand persons communed. The Conference opened the next day with a sermon from Charles Wesley, followed by the baptism of a person who had been converted during the services. Three points were taken up and considered: 1. What to teach. 2. How to teach. 3. How to regulate doctrine, discipline, and practice.

In doctrine it was settled, that to be justified is to be pardoned and taken into God's favor, that faith, preceded by repentance, is the condition of justification, that this faith that justifies is a conviction, by the Holy Ghost, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me; that no man can be justified and not know it; that the immediate fruits of justifying faith are peace, joy, love, power over all outward sin, and power to keep down inward sin; that wilful sin is inconsistent with justifying faith; that no believer need ever again come into condemnation; that works are necessary for the continuance of faith, which cannot be lost but for want of them; and that St. Paul and St. James do not contradict each other when one says Abraham was not justified by works, and the other that he was, because they do not speak of the same justification, and because they do not speak of the same works,—St. Paul speaking of works that precede faith, and St. James of works that spring from it.

In reference to Adam's sin it was agreed that it is imputed to all mankind in the sense, that in consequence of such sin; 1, our bodies are mortal; 2, our souls disunited

from God, and of a sinful, devilish nature; and 3, we are liable to death eternal. It was also agreed that the Bible never affirms that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to any, but rather, that faith is imputed to us for righteousness. The Conference concluded that by the merits of Christ all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam's actual sin; that their bodies will become immortal after the resurrection; that their souls receive a capacity of spiritual life, and an actual spark or seed thereof, and that all believers are reconciled to God and made partakers of the Divine nature.

The Conference defined sanctification to be, a renewal in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness; to be a *perfect Christian* is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, implying the destruction of all inward sin; and faith is the condition and instrument by which such a state of grace is obtained.

While the Conference agreed to obey the Bishops of the Church of England in things indifferent, and to obey the canons as far as they could with a safe conscience, and, if possible, to prevent a schism in the Church, yet they solemnly agreed that they must not neglect to save souls for fear of consequences that might happen after they were dead. They expressed the belief that God's design in raising up the Methodists was to reform the nation, and particularly the Church of England, and to spread scriptural holiness through the land.

They agreed that wherever they preached they must form Societies, because if they did not the preachers could not watch over those who were convinced of sin, and could not lead them to Christ; and that the people could not watch over one another in love and build each other up in faith and holiness.

The Conference agreed that lay assistants were allowable only in cases of necessity, but the necessity was so urgent that it was not safe to dispense with them. The work for the preachers was clearly pointed out. They were to preach morning and evening, to meet the members of all grades once a week, and the classes once a quarter, to hear and decide all differences, to put the disorderly back on trial, and to receive on trial; to see that the leaders, stewards, teachers and housekeepers attended faithfully to their duties; to meet the leaders and stewards weekly and to examine their accounts. It was deeply impressed upon the minds of the preachers to be serious, to talk cautiously and sparingly with women, to take no step towards marriage without consulting Wesley or some of his brother clergymen. They were not to play the *gentleman*, and what Wesley meant by this we may understand when he tells them they had no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing master. They were to be Christian gentlemen, but not the fashionable thing that had usurped that title in Wesley's day. They were taught to be ashamed of nothing but sin, not of fetching water or wood, nor of cleaning their own shoes, nor their neighbors'. They were to take no money of any one, were to make no debts without Wesley's knowledge, not to mend his rules but to keep them, and to employ their time in the way he directed, and they were to keep journals for his satisfaction and their own profit. They were to preach most where they could get the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers. Field preaching was to be used more freely as a means of bringing the masses to hear the word of God. To improve the class meetings and make them more lively and valuable, each leader was to be examined as to his method of leading class, and all the

leaders were to talk with the preachers as often as possible on the subject. Pains were to be taken by pastoral visiting to learn whether all the members were striving to lead holy lives.

Wesley kept the good of the young always before him. His preachers were to meet the children in every place, and give them suitable exhortations. Our readers must indulge us just here in an episode which shows Wesley's love for children and the impression he made upon the minds of young people by his peculiarly tender and affectionate manner. The incident is perfectly authentic, having been recently related to us by a minister who had it from the lips of one of the parties concerned. The gentleman who gave the incident was born in Ireland, and came to this country after reaching mature years. When he was a small lad it was announced in his neighborhood that Mr. Wesley was to preach on a certain day at five in the morning. Being extremely anxious to see Wesley, he with two or three other lads went out very early to the roadside and waited for Wesley to come along. After waiting for some time they saw a person approaching, and when he came near they concluded that he must be Wesley. When he rode up the boys raised their hats and said, "Good morning, Mr. Wesley." The traveller stopped his horse, and said, "Children, why are you here so early in the morning?" They replied, "We came out to see you, Mr. Wesley." At this, Wesley, for it was he, dismounted from his horse, took from his portmanteau a package of tracts, gave one to each boy, and then placing his hand upon the head of each pronounced a blessing. The gentleman was nearly eighty years old when he told this incident to the minister, and though so many years had passed, he said it seemed to him that he had ever since felt

the gentle pressure of that hand upon his head. Wesley instructed his preachers to preach earnestly against the sins of the times, such as Sabbath breaking, dram drinking, evil speaking, uncharitable conversation, lightness, gaiety or richness of apparel, and the going in debt without a prospect of paying. They were to rise at four o'clock, as often as they could, to spend two or three minutes every hour in earnest prayer; to have an hour for secret prayer every morning and evening; he advised them not to spend more than an hour at a time in general conversation, and to use all the means of grace. They were urged to speak freely with each other whenever they might meet, and never to part without prayer. In reference to preaching, they were advised never to preach more than twice a day, unless on Sundays, or extraordinary occasions; to begin and end the service exactly at the time appointed; to suit their subjects to their congregations, to choose very plain texts, and not to ramble from them. They were to avoid everything awkward in language, gesture, or pronunciation; to sing no hymns of their own composing, to choose suitable hymns and not to sing more than five or six verses, and always to suit the tune to the hymn.

The Conference spent six days in its important work. Little did those ten men think they were making a platform for all succeeding Annual Conferences of Methodism for all coming time—the centres of a system which has spread its influences through the world.

CHAPTER IX.

SOON AFTER the close of the Conference Wesley preached his last sermon at the University of Oxford. The duty came to him in regular rotation, and if he declined he must pay fifteen dollars. He concluded to preach and not to pay, and he did so with a plainness and a force that astonished all and offended many of his hearers. The sermon was based upon Acts iv : 31, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Wesley said of it, "I preached, I suppose, for the last time, at St. Mary's. Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of these men. I have fully delivered my own soul." The famous Dr. Kennicott, who was at this time an undergraduate of Wadham College, thus describes Wesley: "He is neither tall nor fat; for the latter would ill become a Methodist. His black hair, quite smooth, and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure in his countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man. His prayer was soft, short and conformable to the rules of the University. He spoke his text very slowly, and with an agreeable emphasis." This critic says further of the sermon, "When he came to what he called his plain, practical conclusion, he fired his address with so much zeal and unbounded satire as quite spoiled what otherwise might have turned to great advantage; for as I liked some, so I disliked other parts of his discourse extremely. * * * He is allowed to

be a man of great parts, and that by the excellent Dean of Christ's Church (Dr. Conybeare); for the day he preached, the dean generously said of him, 'John Wesley will always be thought a man of sound sense, though an enthusiast.' However, the vice-chancellor sent for the sermon, and I hear the heads of colleges intend to show their resentment." The earnest, practical conclusion of this sermon was simply the application of the truth of God's word to the conscience of his hearers, and this John Wesley did in as plain language in the chapel at Oxford as he would have used had he been preaching to Kingswood colliers.

The opposition to the gospel as preached by the Methodists continued, and in some quarters increased in violence. The houses in which the Methodists often preached were of the most wretched description. Wesley was invited to occupy what was called a church. "Such a church," says he, "I never saw before. There was not a glass window belonging to it; but only boards, with holes bored here and there, through which a dim light glimmered. Yet even here the light of God's countenance shone on many hearts." In one of these miserable houses Charles Wesley was preaching against harmless diversions as they are called. There were three clergymen present, Messrs. Meriton, Thompson, and Bennett. "By harmless diversions," said Charles, "I was kept asleep in the devil's arms, secure in a state of damnation, for eighteen years." As soon as Wesley finished this sentence, Meriton cried out, "And I for twenty-five!" "And I," said Thompson, "for thirty-five!" "And I," said Bennett, "and I for above seventy!"

The press gangs that roamed over the country collecting men for the army took a special delight in pressing

the Methodists into the military service. At one town where John Wesley was about to preach, some of his friends told him the mob was waiting for him and intended to press all the men for soldiers. Wesley only replied, "Our only way is to make the best of it while standing;" he went in and preached with his usual calmness and zeal. John Nelson and Thomas Beard had been pressed into the service. Wesley met them at an inn and said, "Brother Nelson, lose no time, speak and spare not, for God has work for you to do in every place where your lot is cast; and when you have fulfilled His good pleasure, He will burst your bonds asunder, and we shall rejoice together." The very poorest people were often Wesley's most efficient helpers in his work. A poor widow with four children offered him her humble house as a place of rest and preaching. Finding the house too small, Wesley stood upon a chair near a mill dam. The miller became very angry, and to stop Wesley from preaching let off the water, hoping to drown his voice. It was a failure. Wesley made the little village a regular preaching place, and the poor widow and her children used to spend the whole of every Friday night in winding bobbins to get money enough to buy tea to treat the preachers to this beverage when they came to the house.

Among the Methodists there were some who at this time professed to enjoy the blessing of entire sanctification. Wesley preached the doctrine, but he was extremely cautious in his own professions of this state of grace, and he was very close in examining those who made a profession of perfect love. He says, "I was with two persons who believe they are saved from all sin. Be it so, or not, why should we not rejoice in the work of God, so far as it is unquestionably wrought in

them. For instance, I asked John C——, ‘Do you always pray? Do you rejoice in God every moment? Do you in everything give thanks? In loss? In pain? In sickness, weariness, disappointments? Do you desire nothing? Do you fear nothing? Do you feel the love of God continually in your heart? Have you a witness, in whatever you speak or do, that it is pleasing to God? If he can solemnly and deliberately answer in the affirmative, why do I not rejoice and praise God on his behalf? Perhaps, because I have an exceedingly complex idea of sanctification, or a sanctified man. And so, for fear he should not have attained all I include in that idea, I cannot rejoice in what he has attained.’ On this point, as it is a very important one, it is well to hear more from Wesley. Not long before his death he gave an account of how he was brought to believe fully in the doctrine of entire sanctification. After many persons in different parts of the country had professed to enjoy the blessing of perfect love, he determined to examine them thoroughly as to their experience. He desired all in London who professed sanctification to meet him at the Foundery. “When we met, first one of us and then another asked them the most searching questions we could devise. They answered every one without hesitation and with the utmost simplicity, so that we were fully persuaded they did not deceive themselves.” Wesley found years after this that more than six hundred in his London Societies professed this state of grace, and he says he could see no reason to doubt their testimony. He says year after year God wrought the same work in others, “and every one of these without exception declared that his deliverance from sin was *instantaneous*; that the change was wrought in a moment. Had half of these, or one-third, or one in twenty, de-

clared it was *gradually* wrought in *them*, I should have believed this, with regard to *them*, and thought that *some* were gradually sanctified and some instantaneously. But as I have not found, in so long a space of time, a single person speaking thus, I cannot but believe that sanctification is commonly, if not always, an *instantaneous* work."

This is Wesley's matured judgment on this Bible doctrine. Himself and his preachers pressed upon the consciences of the Methodists the necessity of a holy life, and thousands rejoiced in the assurance that the blood of Jesus can cleanse from all sin.

In this connection we may well give the proof of the spirit which Wesley sought to impart to his preachers and people. He published a little tract about the riots in Staffordshire, and at the close of it we find the following prayer: "Lo, I come, if this soul and body may be useful to do anything, to do thy will, O God. If it please thee to use the power Thou hast over dust and ashes, here they are to suffer Thy good pleasure. If Thou pleasest to visit me either with pain or dishonour, I will humble myself under it, and, through Thy grace, be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Hereafter no man can take away anything from me, no life, no honor, no estate; since I am ready to lay them down as soon as I perceive Thou requirest them at my hands. Nevertheless, O Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me; but if not, Thy will be done." This prayer expresses the spirit with which Wesley met persecution, and which he strove to infuse into all who labored with him in the gospel.

In the midst of the great revival there were doubters, who said, How can these things be? To all such Wesley declared the work to be of God. He said: "You

have all the proof of this you can reasonably expect or desire. That, in many places, abundance of notorious sinners are totally reformed is declared by a thousand eye and ear witnesses, both of their present and past behavior. What would you have more? What pretence can you have for doubting any longer? Do you delay fixing your judgment till you see a work of God without any stumbling blocks attending it? That never was yet, nor ever will. 'It must needs be that offences will come.' And scarce ever was there such a work of God before, with so few as have attended this."

It is curious and interesting to notice the charges made against the Methodists when arrested and brought before the authorities. A poor man, his wife and seven children, were seized under a warrant issued by a Dr. Borlase. When Wesley asked what harm the poor man had done, the reply was, "The man is well enough in other things, but the gentlemen cannot bear his impudence. Why, sir, he says he knows his sins are forgiven." One day while Wesley was preaching at Gwen-
nap, two men rode furiously into the congregation and began to lay hold on the people. In the midst of the confusion Wesley and others began to sing; upon this Borlase, the head persecutor, called out, "Seize him, seize him. I say seize the preacher for his majesty's service." His men held back, at which he cursed them, and jumping from his horse, caught hold of Wesley's gown saying, "I take you to serve his majesty." Wesley quietly walked with him nearly a mile, when he cooled off and was glad to let the preacher go.

The next day Wesley was to preach at Falmouth. The rabble gathered around the house in which he lodged and bawled out, "Bring out the Canorum! Where is the Canorum?"—a word by which they meant Methodist.

They broke open the doors and rushed into the house. Wesley, perfectly calm, faced them, and asked one after another, looking each in the eye, "To which of you have I done any wrong? To you? or you? or you?" They were all silent. Thus he went on questioning them until he found himself in the street, when he cried out, "Neighbors, countrymen! do you desire to hear me speak?" "Yes, yes," they said, "he shall speak, he shall; no one shall hinder him!" Just then some gentlemen came up and rescued him, and he was sent to a place not far off by water. The people ran along the shore to meet him at the landing. Wesley faced them, and said to the leader, "I wish you a good night;" to which he replied, "I wish you were in hell," and then went off with his rabble. While Wesley met his enemies with the meek spirit of the gospel, he was ready, when he deemed the occasion a proper one, to hold those who bullied the Methodists to account before the law. In Newcastle on one occasion a brutal fellow, who had often abused the Orphan House family, met Wesley in the street and cursed and pushed him. The next day Wesley sent him the following note:

"ROBERT YOUNG,—I expect to see you between this and Friday, and to hear from you, that you are sensible of your faults; otherwise, in pity to your soul, I shall be obliged to inform the magistrates of your assaulting me yesterday in the street. I am your real friend,

JOHN WESLEY."

Mr. Robert Young on receiving this letter came forward, begged pardon, and promised to do better.

John Wesley's life was full of incidents. The following account of his preaching in the house of a priest of the Church of Rome shows how ready he was to do good

to all men. The priest, who had heard strange accounts of the Methodists, came to Newcastle and spent several days at Wesley's Orphan House making an examination of their plans. On leaving he invited Wesley to come and see him and to preach at his house in the town where he lived. He said he would do so, and started for the place, but did not reach it until late at night after a rough ride of nearly sixty miles, besides preaching three times. Wesley reached the priest's house about ten o'clock, and that worthy personage sent out and gathered him a congregation in an old Romish chapel. Wesley preached to them at midnight, and after such a day's work went to rest feeling, he says, "no weariness at all." At five the next morning he preached again in another popish chapel, and many people sat up all night for fear they might not awake in time to hear him. After this visit to the North, Wesley wrote to his brother Charles from Leeds: "It was time for me to give them ground at Newcastle, and to fly for my life. I grew more and more honorable every day: the rich and great flocking to us together, so that many times the room would not hold them. Iniquity for the present hath stopped her mouth; and it is almost fashionable to speak well of us. In all appearance, if I had stayed a month longer, the mayor and aldermen would have been with us."

From this place, where he so much feared popularity, Wesley went southward, and soon we find him in Cornwall, where a very strange incident took place. He was just about to preach when a woman of genteel appearance jumped upon the stand and scolded, screamed, spit and stamped, wrung her hands, and distorted her face in a most violent manner. The woman was a papist, and had heard that Wesley was one also, and this indecent show of temper was made when she found out that he

was not. Wesley let her have matters all her own way, taking no notice of her at all.

Wesley was ready for work among all classes, and about this period he had an opportunity of showing his interest in soldiers. The kingdom was startled by the invasion of Charles Edward Stuart, who had proclaimed his father in the Scottish town of Perth. The whole of the North of England was thrown into the greatest excitement. Wesley was in Newcastle while the army of King George lay around the town, and he was greatly moved at seeing the crowds of drunken and godless soldiers that filled the streets day and night. He wrote to the mayor on the necessity of bringing them under restraint, and of giving them proper religious instruction. Some of the enemies of Methodism had insinuated that to make a soldier religious would be to make him a coward. Referring to those Methodists who had been in the battles on the Continent, Wesley said, "Did those who feared God behave as cowards at Fontenay? Did John Haime, the dragoon, betray any cowardice before or after his horse sunk under him? Or did William Clements, when he received the first ball in his left, and the second in his right arm? Or John Evans, when the cannon ball took off both his legs? Did he not call all about him, as long as he could speak, to praise and fear God, and honor the King? as one who feared nothing, but lest his last breath should be spent in vain."

Wesley went to the camp and preached several times. "None," he says, "attempted to make the least disturbance, from the beginning to the end. Yet, I could not reach their hearts. The words of a scholar did not affect them like those of a dragoon or a grenadier." He alludes to the powerful and successful preaching of John Haime and other Methodists in the English army.

Wesley's second Conference was held this year (1745) at Bristol. It began on the 1st of August and continued five days. Besides John and Charles Wesley, one clergyman, Rev. Mr. Hodges, was present. The lay itinerant preachers were Thomas Richards, Samuel Larwood, Thomas Meyrick, Richard Moss, John Slocumb, and Herbert Jenkins. There was a layman present, Marmaduke Gwynne, from Wales, whose daughter Charles Wesley afterwards married. At the opening of the Conference it was agreed that every person might fully speak his thoughts, and that no one should be checked though what he was saying were plainly wrong. The first thing the Conference did was to review the doctrine of Justification. It was agreed that while faith in Christ is the sole condition of justification, repentance must precede saving faith, and that there must also be fruits or works meet for repentance. The Conference considered the doctrine of sanctification. It was agreed that inward sanctification begins the moment a person is justified, from which time the believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace; that the seeds of sin remain until he is sanctified in spirit, soul, and body. They thought that sanctification is not ordinarily given until just before death, but that believers should seek for it and expect it sooner; for though they thought it was not usually enjoyed until a little before death, this did not, in their view, prove that we may not be sanctified to-day. It was agreed that in preaching this doctrine great care should be observed, and that it should always be by way of promise—by drawing, not by driving. The general means to be used in order to receive this blessing were the keeping of all God's commandments, denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; the particular means were prayer, searching the Scriptures, communi-

cating, and fasting. Years after this Conference Wesley said on this same subject: "In this, as in all other instances, 'by grace we are saved through faith.' Sanctification is 'not of works, lest any man should boast.' 'It is the gift of God,' and is to be received by plain, simple faith. Suppose you are now laboring to abstain from all appearance of evil, zealous of good works, and walking diligently and carefully in all the ordinances of God; there is then only one point remaining: the voice of God to your soul is, 'Believe and be saved.' First, believe that God has *promised* to save you from all sin, and to fill you with all holiness. Secondly, believe that He is *able* thus to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him. Thirdly, believe that He is *willing* as well as able. Fourthly, believe that He is not only able, but willing to do it now! Not when you come to die, not at any distant time, not to-morrow, but to-day. He will then enable you to believe *it is done*, according to His word; and then, 'patience shall have its perfect work, and ye shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.'"

The Conference considered the question of church government, and to the question: "Is episcopal, presbyterian, or independent church government most agreeable to reason?" they gave this answer: "Each is a development of the other. A preacher preaches, and forms an *independent* congregation; he then forms another and another in the immediate vicinity of the first. This obliges him to appoint *deacons*, who look on the first pastor as their common father; and as these congregations increase, and as these *deacons* grow in years and grace, they need other subordinate deacons or helpers, in respect of whom they are called *presbyters*, or elders, as their father in the Lord may be called the *bishop*, or overseer of them all."

Wesley had now fourteen assistants, and it was agreed that their one work was to save souls; and that they might do this successfully, they were directed by the Conference to preach every morning and night; to spend every day from six till twelve o'clock in reading, writing, and prayer; to visit their flocks from twelve till five, and to spend the hour from five to six in secret prayer and meditation. The men trained in such a school and under the eye of such a worker as John Wesley could not fail of success; and under the blessing of God they led thousands out of darkness into light.

Wesley not only preached, but wrote against the common sins of his day. He was always at work for the good of society. He sent out by millions all over England short and pointed tracts on the evils which generally prevailed. We give the titles of some of these with extracts: "Swear not at all, saith the Lord of Hosts." "A word to a Swearer." In this he said: "In what city or town, in what market or exchange, in what street or place of public resort, is not the name of God taken in vain, day by day? From the noble to the peasant, who fails to call upon God in this, if in no other way? Whither can you turn, where can you go, without hearing some praying to God for damnation, either on his neighbor or himself? cursing those without fear or remorse whom Christ hath bought to inherit a blessing!" In "A Word to a Sabbath-breaker" he said: "How many are they who profane the Sabbath with a high hand! How many that openly defy God, that break the laws both Divine and human, by working at their trade, delivering their goods, receiving their pay, or following their ordinary business, and wiping their mouths and saying, 'I do no evil!' How many buy and sell on the day of the Lord, even in the open streets? How many open or

(with some modesty) half open their shops? even when they have not the pretence of perishable goods; without any pretence at all; money is their god, and gain their godliness. What also are these drives in the outskirts of the town, that well-nigh cover the face of the earth? till they drop one after another into the numerous receptacles prepared for them in every corner. They drink iniquity like water."

"The religious observance of the Sabbath," said Wesley, "is the best preservation of virtue and religion, and the neglect and profanation of it is the greatest inlet to vice and wickedness."

In "A Word to a Drunkard," he said: "Are *you* a man? God made you a *man*; but you make yourself a beast. Wherein does a *man* differ from a *beast*? Is it not chiefly in *reason and understanding*? But you throw away what *reason* you have. You strip yourself of your *understanding*. You do all you can to make yourself a mere *beast*; not a fool, not a madman only, but a *swine*, a poor, filthy swine. Go and wallow with them in the mire! Go, drink on, till thy nakedness be uncovered and shameful spewing be on thy glory! O how honorable is a *beast* of God's making, compared to one who makes himself a *beast*! But that is not all. You make yourself a *devil*. You stir up all the devilish tempers that are in you, and gain others which perhaps were not in you. You cause the fire of anger or malice or lust to burn seven times hotter than before."

These plain and burning words of Wesley against the common sins of the day will show the state of English society and the evils against which Methodism made its way by the sheer force of the truth preached in simplicity and in the power of the Holy Ghost. Wesley gave a tract called "Advice to the People called Metho-

dists," which those who bear that name should never forget. He advised them, 1. To consider deeply the circumstances in which they stood; for their name, their principles, and their strictness of life were *new*. They were *newly united* together, a poor, low, and insignificant people—most even of their teachers being quite unlearned men. 2. Not to imagine they could avoid giving offence. 3. To consider deeply with themselves, Is the God whom we serve able to deliver us? 4. To be true to their principles. 5. Not to talk much of what they suffered.

Wesley was a most diligent writer; he knew the power of the pen, and the great value of good and cheap books scattered over a country. It would be wise in those who conduct Methodist publishing houses the world over to consider the following from this great man, written about eight years before his death: "Two and forty years ago," he says, "having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books, than any I had seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny a piece; and afterwards several larger. Some of these had such a sale as I never thought of; and by this means, I unawares became rich. But I never desired or endeavored after it. And now that it is come upon me unawares, I lay up no treasures upon earth; I lay up nothing at all. I cannot help leaving my books behind me whenever God calls me hence; but in every other respect, my own hands will be my executors."

While the Wesleys were calling sinners to repentance in England, Whitefield was doing the same work in America. He wrote Wesley in 1746: "If you ask what I am doing—ranging and hunting the American woods after poor sinners. If you ask, with what success—my labors were never more acceptable; and the door for

fifteen hundred miles together, is quite open for preaching the everlasting gospel. In Maryland and Virginia, people fly to hear the word like doves to the windows." Whitefield did not meet the brutal mobs in America that his brethren in England had to face.

Charles Wesley went into Cornwall, and his coming was the signal for all manner of violence. At one place as soon as he opened the service the rabble "began roaring, stamping, blaspheming, ringing the bells, and turning the church into a bear garden." At another town, finding no more suitable place, he preached in a cock pit; an English squire tried to raise a mob, and two base fellows brought a couple of cocks and set them to fighting; but the preacher went on and finished his sermon, and poured out his happy soul in this strain:

" All thanks be to God,
Who scatters abroad,
By the least of his servants, his savor of grace;
Who the victory gave,
The praise let him have,
For the work he has done
All honor and glory to Jesus alone!"

The journeys of Wesley and his preachers were made on foot or on horseback, and were sometimes attended with much suffering. On a route of over three hundred miles from Bristol to Newcastle, Wesley met with severe weather and most cruel treatment from mobs. The roads were in a dreadful condition, rain and snow fell heavily, and the weary man was actually covered from head to foot with sleet. As he passed through Leeds the mob pelted him with stones, dirt, and whatever they could find. He was struck upon the face several times, but not severely hurt. He spent eighteen days preaching in various places about Newcastle, and on one occa-

sion in the midst of a violent storm, which neither the preacher nor his hearers regarded.

The preachers that helped Wesley in his great work were generally without the advantages of education or general reading. But they knew the value of religion by happy experience, and their sermons were usually upon the first principles of religion. Repentance, faith, and a holy life they urged upon all who heard with a fervor that hardly ever failed to bring sinners to Christ. But Wesley was too wise a man to allow his preachers to work on without giving them a course of reading for the improvement of their minds. He felt that they must both preach and read. In making out a course of reading he called to his aid the celebrated Dr. Doddridge, who furnished him the following list of subjects to be studied by the Methodist itinerants: Logic, Metaphysics, Ethics, Jewish Antiquities, Civil History, Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Natural and Revealed Religion; in Divinity the most eminent authors were recommended, such as Baxter, Flavel, Owen, Bates, Howe, &c. It can be readily seen how men of naturally good minds studying such subjects and such writers would become workmen not to be ashamed.

Wesley was a man of prayer. He gives an instance of an answer to prayer which is so remarkable that we notice it for the benefit of our readers. On a journey he had ridden nearly fifty miles, when his horse became very lame. He says, "By riding thus seven miles, I was thoroughly tired, and my head ached more than it had done for months. I then thought, 'Cannot God heal either man or beast, by any means, or without any?' Immediately my weariness and headache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant. I here aver a naked fact; let every man account for it as he sees good."

Wesley never allowed a Society to suffer from the presence of useless and unworthy members. Of a certain town he said: "I had long doubted what it was which hindered the work of God here. But, upon inquiry, the case was plain. So many of the Society were either triflers or disorderly walkers, that the blessing of God could not rest upon them; so I made short work cutting off all such at a stroke, and leaving only a little handful, who, as far as can be judged, were really in earnest to save their souls." At another place he found a very lively Society, but a few he felt "obliged to reprove for negligence in meeting, which is always the forerunner of greater evils."

The sufferings of poor people always touched the heart of Wesley. We have already seen how he begged money to furnish them with food and clothing; he now proposed to do more by regularly supplying them with proper physic when sick. After thinking much about them, he says, "I thought of a desperate expedient: 'I will prepare and give them physic myself.' For six or seven and twenty years, I had made anatomy and physic the diversion of my leisure hours; though I never properly studied them, unless for a few months when I was going to America, where I imagined I might be of some service to those who had no regular physician among them. I applied to it again. I took into my assistance an apothecary and an experienced surgeon; resolving, at the same time, not to go out of my depth, but to leave all difficult and complicated cases to such physicians as the patients should choose. I gave notice of this to the Society; and in five months medicines were occasionally given to above five hundred persons. Several of these I never saw before, for I did not regard whether they were of the Society or not. In that time, seventy-one

of these, regularly taking their medicines, and following the regimen prescribed (which three in four would not do), were entirely cured of distempers long thought to be incurable. The whole expense of medicines during this time was nearly forty pounds." This kind act of Wesley brought upon him the ridicule of many people, and they branded him as a quack. But he went on with his good work, and he had the blessing of the poor people whom he relieved. In a letter in defence of his course he says: "I do not know that any one patient yet has died under my hands. If any one does let it be declared with the time and circumstances." Again he said: "I have believed it my duty within these four months last passed, to prescribe such medicines to six or seven hundred of the poor as I knew were proper for their several disorders. Within six weeks, nine or ten of them, who had taken these medicines, were remarkably altered for the better; and more cured of disorders under which they had labored for ten, twenty, forty years. Now ought I to have let one of these poor wretches perish because I was not a regular physician? to have said, 'I know what will cure you; but I am not of the college; you must send for Dr. Mead? Before Dr. Mead had come in his chariot, the man might have been in his coffin. And when the doctor was come, where was his fee? What! he cannot live upon nothing! So, instead of an orderly cure, the patient dies; and God requires his blood at my hands.'" This letter was written to Archbishop Secker, to whom probably some straight-laced clergymen had reported that John Wesley was setting up for a doctor. The whole affair was a pure charity on the part of Wesley. He was not the man to be turned aside from a good work, and his dispensary in London worked so well that he soon estab-

lished another at Bristol, of which he said in writing to a friend: "We have now upwards of two hundred patients at Bristol. They increase daily. Many have already desired to return thanks, having found a considerable change for the better already."

Wesley's third Conference met at Bristol in May (1746.) Besides the two leaders, the only clergymen present were Messrs. Hodges and Taylor. The itinerants present were Messrs. Reeves, Maxfield, Westall, Willis, and Glascot. Doctrines were carefully reviewed and great care taken to guard against error. "The properest persons to be present" at Conference were decided to be, 1. The preachers. 2. The most earnest and most sensible of the band leaders living in the town where the Conference was held. 3. Any pious and judicious stranger who might be visiting the place. The preachers who helped Wesley in his work were defined to be "extraordinary messengers, designed of God to provoke the others to jealousy." The Conference determined to examine all who felt called to preach, on three points with great care: Have they grace, gifts, and fruit? If these marks clearly appeared they were accepted as helpers. The subject matter of preaching was closely considered. It was agreed that the sermons attended with the greatest blessing were, "1. Such as were most close, convincing, particular. 2. Such as had most of Christ, the Priest, the Atonement. 3. Such as urged the heinousness of men's living in contempt or ignorance of Him." A call of Providence to a new place was to be determined by an invitation from some worthy person, and by a prospect of doing more good by going than by staying where they were. In this way circuits grew up. We have seen that Methodist Conferences grew out of the necessity for consultation between Wes-

ley and his helpers. We shall see circuits growing out of a desire to carry the gospel to as many souls as possible in a given section. Starting from one point, a preacher went from place to place preaching and visiting until he came to that point again, and thus having completed a circle as it were, his field of labor was called a circuit. These circuits were at first very large, many times larger than circuits are now. We see by this how the plans of Methodism were opened and established by God's providence. Wesley always watched closely the signs that God gave him, and sought to go where His hand pointed. He had no cut and dried plans prepared beforehand. Methodism is the child of Providence. It will be well for all Methodists to remember this, and so to live and act, and so closely to follow the example of Wesley, that God may never cast them and their Church away.

In what spirit and with what aim Wesley preached and talked and wrote, we learn from his own preface to the first volume of sermons he published. He did not put his thoughts in an elaborate, elegant, or rhetorical dress, though he might have done this as a man of great capacity and learning. He had a nobler purpose than to please by fine writing. He says, "I now write as I speak to the people. I design plain truth for plain people; therefore, of set purpose, I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations; from all perplexed and intricate reasonings; and as far as possible from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scripture. I have thought, I am a creature of a day. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God. I want to know one thing—the way to heaven. God himself has condescended to teach me the way. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that

book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it; here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone. God only is here. In His presence, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights, and ask Him to let me know His will. I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture. I meditate thereon with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God; and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn I teach." What a beautiful lesson for all who would read the Holy Scriptures aright! Is it any wonder that sermons composed in such a spirit and written by such a man should be the means of leading multiplied thousands to Christ? And what an example does Wesley set for all ministers who really desire not to make a parade of learning, but to profit their hearers by preaching a pure and simple gospel.

The men that Wesley sent forth to preach caught the spirit of their leader and bravely faced the mobs that cursed, abused, and pelted them with all kinds of missiles. The treatment of the sturdy itinerant, John Nelson, is a sample of the trials and sufferings that the early preachers endured for Christ's sake. He exerted a powerful influence on the common people, and they came out in vast crowds to hear him preach. But the furious mobs would rush upon him like lions, and several times he nearly lost his life. At one place a party of wicked young men resolved to seize the first Methodist preacher that should come among them, to put a rope

about his neck, and drag him to the river and drown him. Nelson was the first preacher that came. With six large hand bells they drowned his voice, when one of them rushed up to throw a rope around his neck, Nelson pushed him back, and the fellow fell to the ground. A constable came up at this moment, and taking the preacher by the hand, led him through the crowd, and helping him to mount his horse, bade him begone. At another town he fared much worse. Showers of bricks and stones were thrown at him while preaching, and the attack was so fierce that all who were near him ran off; none of the missiles struck him, but just as he stepped down from the table from which he had preached, a man struck him on the back of his head with a brick, and he fell bleeding to the ground. When he was raised up the blood was running in a stream down his back, filling his shoes, while the mob followed shouting and threatening to kill him; "Lord," cried the poor preacher, "Thou wast slain without the gate and canst deliver me from these bloodthirsty men." A man opened his door and took him in, a doctor came and bound up his wound, and the same day he went on to preach at another place. Here he was seized by several strong men, who threw him to the ground, and six of them stood on him "to tread the Holy Ghost out of him." "They then let me alone," he says, "and said one to another, 'We cannot kill him.' One said, 'I have heard that a cat hath nine lives, but I think he hath nine score.' Another said, 'If he has he shall die this day.' A third said, 'Where is his horse? for he shall quit the town immediately.' And they said to me, 'Order your horse to be brought to you, for you shall go before we leave you.' I said, 'I will not, for you intend to kill me in private that you may escape justice; but if you do murder me it shall be in

public; and it may be that the gallows will bring you to repentance, and your souls may be saved from the wrath to come." They then seized him and tried to drag him to a well to throw him in, but a woman near the well beat them off and actually knocked several of them down. Nelson escaped and next day rode forty miles to meet Wesley and hear him preach. He was filled with joy, and "I find," he says, "the word to come with power to my soul," and was constrained to cry out, "O Lord I will praise thee for thy goodness to me, for Thou hast been with me in all my trials; Thou hast brought me out of the jaws of death; and though Thou didst permit men to ride over my head, and laid affliction on my loins, yet Thou hast brought me through fire and water into a wealthy place." And in the fullness of a grateful heart he continues: "O my dear Redeemer, how shall I praise thee as Thou oughtest to be praised? O let my life be a sacrifice to Thee, for it is by Thee alone that I have escaped temporal and eternal death."

It was often the case that the most violent persecutors were stricken down by the power of God, and became zealous Christians. A man named John Thorp was one of a number of men who frequented a drinking house where one of the amusements was to burlesque the preaching of the Methodists. One day three of the company had mounted a table, taken a text from the Bible, and mimicked the preachers. Thorp's turn came next, and he mounted the table, saying he would beat them all by an imitation of Whitefield. He opened the Bible and the first passage his eyes fell upon was, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." He felt as if a sword had pierced him, but he went on with his sermon and amazed his drunken companions by the force and fervor of his words. He said some of his sentences

made his hair stand on his head. "If ever I preached in my life," he says, "by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was at that time." He was soon after converted and became a preacher.

We have made reference to the Methodist soldiers who served in the English army in Flanders. These zealous servants of God merit a more extended notice. John Haime, Sampson Staniforth, Mark Bond, William Clements, and John Evans were the leading men in the great revival among the soldiers. Haime was a man of gloomy experience and had terrible battles with Satan, but he was a most faithful preacher. In almost every regiment there were converts, and three hundred were organized into Societies. Haime preached as often as five times a day, and to do so, often walking between twenty and thirty miles. At one town the General gave him permission to preach every day in the English church, and the Methodist soldiers would march in procession to the meetings, where their hearty singing brought large crowds to the services. In battle the Methodist soldiers showed the value of their religion. The day before the battle of Fontenay, says Staniforth, "I stepped out of the line and threw myself on the ground, and prayed that God would deliver me from all fear, and enable me to behave as a Christian and good soldier. Glory be to God, he heard my cry and took away all my fear. I came into the ranks again, and had both peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." One of the Methodists on going into battle said, "I am going to rest in the bosom of Jesus." He was killed before night. "This day," says Haime, "God was pleased to prove our little flock, and to show them his mighty power. They showed such courage and boldness in the fight as made the officers as well as soldiers amazed. When

wounded, some cried out, 'I am going to my Beloved.' Others, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.'" When Clements had his arm broken, his comrades wished to carry him out of the fight; but he said, "No; I have an arm left to hold my sword, I will not go yet." When his other arm was broken he said, "I am as happy as I can be out of paradise." John Evans, one of the preachers, had both legs shot off, and was laid across a cannon to die; he praised God as long as he had breath. Haime thought he would not be killed that day. In the midst of the battle his horse was killed under him by a cannon-ball. An officer called out to him, "Haime, where is your God now?" He replied, "Sir, he is here and he will bring me out of this battle." In a few moments the officer's head was taken off by a cannon-ball. As he left the field after the battle Haime met one of his comrades covered with blood, seeking water, who said, "Brother Haime, I have got a sore wound." "Have you Christ in your heart?" said Haime. "I have," said the soldier, "and I have had him all day. Glory be to God for all his mercies." Bond was killed, and "here fell," said Staniforth, "a great Christian, a good soldier, and a faithful friend." Haime and Staniforth were spared and returned to England, where they labored faithfully as preachers, and died old men in peace and joy. The Methodist soldiers, when the war was over, were the instruments in planting Methodism in many places in England and Scotland.

CHAPTER X.

LET US now look for a few moments at the labors of Whitefield and his preachers. They differed with Wesley in doctrine, but they were not less zealous in preaching the gospel in the face of the greatest opposition. Whitefield was now (1747) in America ranging the country from Georgia to Massachusetts, and preaching with angelic fervor to thousands of hearers. In Wales, Howell Harris wrote of the prospect: "Wales is like the garden of the Lord; many are awakened and fresh doors opened. Hasten thy winged motion, oh glorious day! when I shall see Paul and Barnabas, Luther and Calvin, and all the saints, joining in one song, and not so much as remembering that they ever differed." James Kelley preached at Tewkesbury, where "a furious mob assaulted him, swore, cursed, laughed, pricked the congregation with pins; threw handfuls of snuff among them, and brickbats and dirt; and broke the windows of the house; but in the midst of all, he continued preaching for an hour." John Edwards preached with great success, and says of his work: "Oh, what seasons we have had; souls fired with the love of God, and following the word from place to place, horse and foot, like men engaged in a war, determined to take the city by force of arms."

One of the most zealous ministers of the Church that entered into the great revival was Rev. William Grimshaw, of Haworth, in Yorkshire. He was a preacher for ten years before he knew the life and power of religion. After great mental agony he embraced the doctrines of Methodism, and in them found peace to his

soul. He retained his parish, but became one of Wesley's "Assistants," and superintended two circuits. The people of his parish were very ignorant and brutal, but by almost apostolic labors he reformed them and led hundreds to Christ. His hearers melted under his earnest and eloquent preaching, and many would fall like dead men to the ground. He went round his circuit every two weeks, and sometimes preached thirty sermons a week. If his people would not come to church, he would preach before their doors saying, "If you will not come to hear me at the church, you shall hear me at home; if you perish, you shall perish with the sound of the gospel in your ears." He sometimes disguised himself and went about among his people that he might detect and reprove their vices. Once he went as a beggar to the house of a man supposed to be very kind to the poor, and asked to be taken in for a night, but was driven away; he knew afterwards how to rebuke such pretended charity. Wesley and Whitefield often visited him, and he was always delighted to have them or their preachers in his house. He was a servant to them, even cleaning their shoes, and when the house was full, would give up his own bed and sleep in the barn. When one of the itinerants had preached a very impressive sermon, Grimshaw took him in his arms saying, "The Lord bless thee! this is worth a hundred of my sermons." Once in company with John Wesley, he felt the brutal power of a mob. Wesley, who said his rule was always to face a mob, took his stand and began to preach; before he finished a furious multitude came rushing into the town. He and Grimshaw were borne off for two miles to another place, and while on the way one of the rioters struck Wesley a heavy blow on the face, while another, with horrid curses, brandished a club

over his head. They demanded that they should promise to preach no more in the neighborhood. Wesley said that he would sooner cut off his right arm than give such a promise. He and the justice then went out at one door, and Grimshaw and a friend at another, when the mob rushed upon the latter, "tossed them to and fro with the utmost violence," and covered them with mud and dirt. Grimshaw was knocked down, but got up and soon joined Wesley. As they went off they were pelted by the crowd with dirt and stones; and Wesley was once knocked down. The next day he preached to a vast congregation at another place, and says, "I lifted up my hands, and preached as I never did in my life."

The houses in which the Methodists worshipped were of the humblest kind; a barn, a carpenter's shop, a sail loft, furnished with a few rude seats, was often a place in which God made known his power. In Manchester, England, where Methodism is now so powerful, the beginnings were very unpromising. A few persons who had formed a Society invited Wesley to visit them and preach for them. He went, of course, and the little band grew in numbers. One of the preachers, years afterwards, at a Conference at Manchester, referring to this preaching place, said: "In 1749, I preached in an old garret that overhung the river. * * * * The coals were in one corner of the room, the looms in another, and I was in danger of breaking my neck in getting up to it. The congregations consisted of not more than from twenty to thirty persons." The garret room was the home of a poor woman who worked her spinning wheel in one corner, while her husband wove in another.

When Wesley reached London, after an extended tour in the northern part of England, he at once turned his

attention to the poor, and made an addition to his means of relieving their wants. He rented and fitted up two small houses for poor widows and others who needed such a home. Of this new work of charity, he wrote the next year (1748): "In this (commonly called the poor-house) we have now nine widows, one blind woman, two poor children, and two upper servants, a maid and a man. I might add, four or five preachers; for I myself, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food, and at the same table; and we rejoice herein, as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in our Father's kingdom."

Wesley gave special attention to his stewards, whom he regarded as very valuable officers in the church. In London he reduced the number from sixteen to seven. He gave them very careful instructions as to their behavior and the method of conducting their church business. They were to have meetings twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays; and they were to begin and end with prayer. Once a month they were to transcribe their accounts into a ledger. Each steward in turn was to be chairman for a month. Nothing was to be done without the consent of the minister. The stewards were to be very serious; only one was to speak at a time, and he only just loud enough to make himself heard. Clamour and contention were to be avoided. If they could give the poor that came for relief nothing else, they must at least give them soft words, and make them glad to come even though they might go away empty. A steward who broke any of these rules, after being admonished three times by the chairman, was to be put out of the office.

Wesley was deeply interested in the education of the young, and established schools wherever it was practica-

ble to do so. He had one in London, where most of the children, being extremely poor, were taught without charge. He also established a lending society. For this purpose he walked nearly all over London and collected about \$250, which he placed in the hands of the stewards as a fund, from which they were to loan to needy persons who wanted small sums, not above \$5, which they were to pay back in three months. Wesley said of this plan: "It is almost incredible, but, with this inconsiderable sum, two hundred and fifty have been assisted within the year 1747. Will not God put it into the heart of some lover of mankind to increase this little stock? If this is not lending unto the Lord, what is?" By the liberality of some of his friends, Wesley did increase this fund, and when it became larger the maximum loan was raised to \$25. Hundreds of poor people were greatly helped in business, and one instance is given where a man who was a poor cobbler obtained a loan from this fund, went into the book business, and in eighteen years the income from his immense sales brought him \$25,000 a year.

Thus in every way that he could, Wesley helped his fellow men. His motto seemed to be, "to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

The Conference of 1747 began on June 15 and ended on the 20th. It was the largest yet held. Besides John and Charles Wesley, four other clergymen were present: Charles Manning, Richard Thomas Bateman, Henry Piers, and Vincent Perronet. Howell Harris, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist, and nine of Wesley's assistants, were in attendance. The Conference closely reviewed their doctrines and practices. It was agreed that they had been too limited in their field preaching, and they

thought they had paid "respect to persons" by giving more attention to the rich than to the poor. Wesley had now twenty-two helpers, besides thirty-eight local preachers, who aided much in the general work. The plainness and candor of these men in their Conferences is worthy of special notice. "In our first Conference," they say, "it was agreed to examine every point from the foundation. Have we not been somewhat fearful in doing this? What were we afraid of? Of overturning our first principles? Whoever was afraid of this, it was a vain fear. For if they were true, they will bear the strictest examination. If they are false, the sooner they are overturned the better. Let us all pray for a willingness to receive light; an inevitable desire to know of every doctrine whether it be of God." Such was the spirit of the first Methodist preachers.

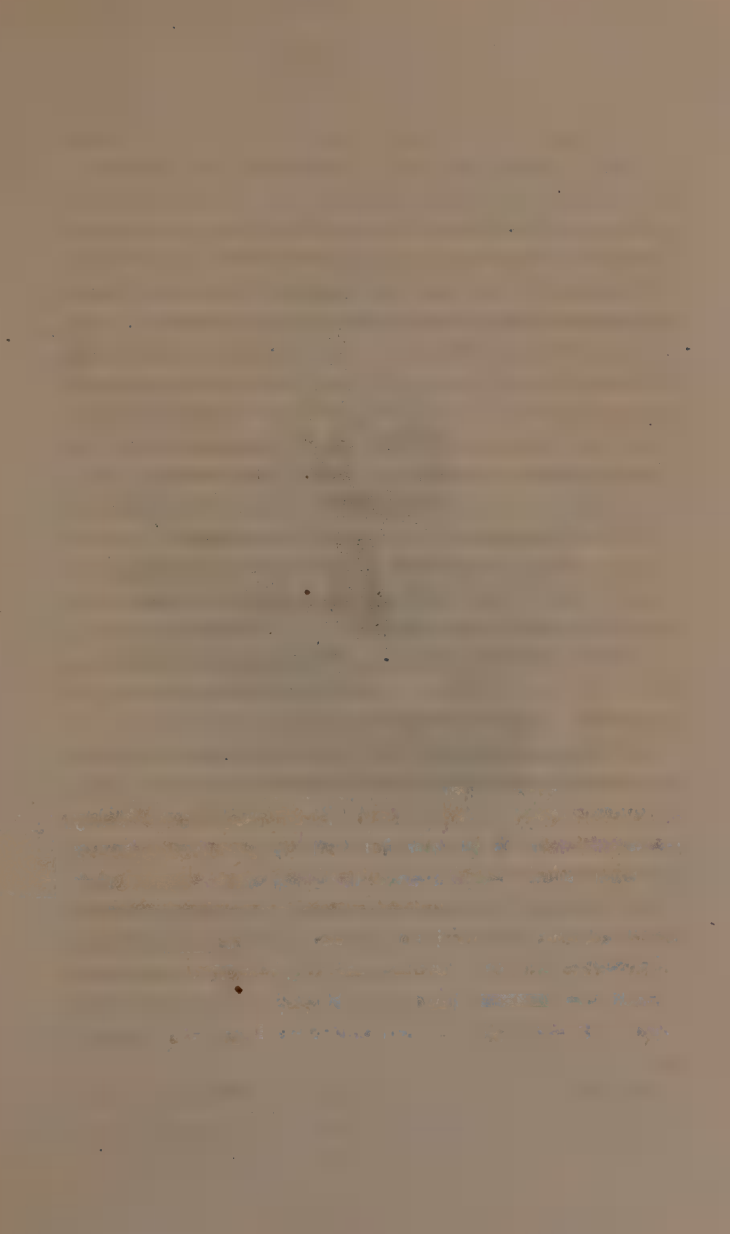
Soon after the Conference Wesley went into Cornwall on a preaching tour. At a town where he was to preach a man said, if he preaches here I will stone him. Wesley came and read as his text, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The man had no sooner heard the text than his courage failed him, and he dropped his rocks and went off wondering at the preacher.

This year (1747) Wesley for the first time visited Ireland. He landed in Dublin Bay in August, and began a work among the Irish which still goes on with power. The Moravians had preached and gathered some Societies previous to his coming, and one Thomas Williams, a Methodist itinerant, had gathered a Society of about two hundred in Dublin. Wesley's first sermon was preached he says "to as gay and senseless a congregation as he ever saw." He spent two weeks in Ireland preaching and visiting, and then returned to England. In Septem-

ber Charles Wesley came over. During the absence of his brother, the mob showed their hatred of Methodism by breaking into the chapel, destroying the furniture, and burning the pulpit in the street. Some of the ruffians used their shillalahs quite freely on the heads of the Methodists. The Irish gave the Methodists a new name. They called them "Swaddlers." John Cennick, a Moravian preacher, in a tirade against papal idolatry, had said, "I curse and blaspheme all the gods in heaven but the Babe that lay in Mary's lap, the Babe that lay in swaddling clouts." He was afterwards called "Swaddling John," and the Methodists, "Swaddlers."

Methodism met a fierce and brutal opposition in Ireland. The children were taught to run after Wesley in the streets shouting, "Swaddler, Swaddler!" "The word," he says, "sticks to us all, not excepting the clergy." He met the mobs with his usual courage. He said after a week's preaching, "Woe is me now, for my soul is wearied because of the murderers which the city is full of." A mob seldom broke up until some one had been killed. A Methodist was thrown into a cellar and stones cast upon him; another was thrown to the ground and stamped upon by the brutal wretches until he died. The murderers were tried, but, "as usual," says Wesley, were acquitted. A woman was knocked down and beaten to death in the street. An officer of police who tried to protect Wesley was knocked down, beaten and dragged until dead and then hung up in savage triumph. No one was arrested for this brutal deed. Wesley was stoned through the length of a street, and might have been killed had not a young man shielded him with his own body.

But even an Irish mob was conquered by the spirit and endurance of the Methodists. After a while they





Charles Wesley, the Sweet Singer of Methodism.

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were able to preach in peace on the public square, and Wesley at last said that he had never preached to a more orderly congregation even in the Foundery at London. The word came with power to the hearts of the people, and often their sobs and cries would drown his voice. Some of his preachers went out into the country places, and Wesley followed to confirm the souls of believers. As he rode along he could hear the Methodist tunes sung or whistled even by the children of Catholics. At one place the whole town crowded out to hear him. "Never," he says, "have I spoken to more hungry souls. They devoured every word. Some expressed their satisfaction in a way peculiar to them, and whistled for joy. The people of Tyrell's Pass were wicked to a proverb—swearers, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, thieves, &c., from time immemorial. But now the scene is entirely changed. Not an oath is heard, not a drunkard seen among them. They are turned from darkness to light. Near one hundred joined in Society, and following hard after the pardoning God."

It is a well known fact, or ought to be well known at least by Methodists, that simple, hearty singing was a source of much power in all the early revivals. Charles Wesley's pure gospel hymns, with easy tunes, were sung with heartiness in all the congregations, and the worst sinners were often seen to weep while they listened to the music made by joyous believers. The Irish were deeply impressed by such singing. An anecdote is on record which illustrates this point. In a certain place the Methodists were very much persecuted by the Roman Catholics, and to avoid disturbance they met in a barn with closed doors. One of the persecutors crept into the barn and concealed himself in a large sack, intending at the proper time to open the door for his comrades.

He lay quiet until the singing began, and he was so much pleased with it he concluded to hear it through before he opened the door; when the singing was over, he thought he would lie still and hear the prayer. But the prayer was too much for him; he began to tremble; presently, he roared out and alarmed the congregation, some of whom thought the devil was in the sack. When the sack was pulled off the poor wretch he was found weeping and praying in great distress. He was soon happily converted.

Another case is related. A tavern keeper, fond of music, wished to enjoy Methodist singing without hearing Methodist preaching, so he went to meeting and listened to the singing, but when that was over and the preacher was about to take his text, he hung his head and put his fingers into his ears, and thus sat; but a fly lit upon his nose and annoyed him, and at the moment he moved his hand to drive it off the preacher repeated his text with emphasis, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." The word took hold on his heart, and he became a penitent and was soon converted.

One of Wesley's most faithful preachers lost his life for Christ's sake in Ireland. John McBurney once tried to preach near a place called Enniskillen. While the people were singing the mob rushed in armed with clubs, broke the windows to pieces, and drove them all out. McBurney was knocked down and dragged on the ground until he became insensible. On coming to himself, he tried to rise, but fell again. A brutal man rushed up to him, and stamped on his face, saying he would "tread the Holy Ghost out of him." "May God forgive you," said McBurney, "as I do." He was then placed on his horse and driven furiously down the mountain side by one of the rioters who had mounted behind him. He

was rescued from them by a kind man who took him into his house. He went on preaching as long as he was able, but at last died of the brutal treatment he had received from this mob.

But while Methodism was terribly persecuted in Ireland, many were gathered into her folds that became burning and shining lights. Under the preaching of Robert Swindells, one of the most faithful assistants, a young Catholic was converted who became a preacher, and one of the most remarkable men of his age. His name was Thomas Walsh, and twenty years after his conversion and entrance into the ministry, Wesley said of him that he knew a young man who was so thoroughly acquainted with the Bible that if he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old or any Greek in the New Testament, he would tell, after a brief pause, not only how often the one or the other occurred in the Bible, but what it meant in every place. Such a master of biblical knowledge he says he never saw before, and never expected to see again. He was such a student of the Bible in the original tongues as is rarely seen. He mingled his studies with prayer and praise. Turning his face to the wall and lifting up his heart and countenance to heaven with his arms clasped about his breast, he would stand for some time before the Lord in solemn recollection, and again return to his work. He would rise at four o'clock to pursue his studies, and on his knees he usually studied his Bible. "A truly laudable and worthy study," he exclaims, "whereby a man is able to converse with God, with holy angels, with patriarchs and prophets, and clearly to unfold to men the mind of God from the language of God!" He would cry out in the midst of his studies, "I fain would rest on Thee! I thirst for the divine life. I pray for the Spirit of illumination. I

cast my soul upon Jesus Christ, the God of glory, and the Redeemer of the world. I desire to be conformable unto him—his friend, servant, disciple, and sacrifice.” When he entered the ministry, his cry was “Lord Jesus! Lord Jesus, I lay my soul at thy feet, to be taught and governed by thee; take the veil from the mystery, and show me the truth as it is in thyself; be thou my sun, my star by day and by night.” He walked thirty miles to his first appointment, and preached in a barn to a congregation in which many mocked while others wept over their sins. He preached with great success among the Irish, both in English and in Irish, and turned thousands to Christ amid the fires of persecution. One who heard him said of his sermon that “such a sluice of divine oratory ran through his language as is rarely to be met with.” Wesley used to speak of him as “that blessed man,” and says, “Wherever he preached the word, whether in English or Irish, it was sharper than a two-edged sword. I do not remember ever to have known a preacher who, in so few years as he remained upon earth, was an instrument of converting so many sinners.” Nine years he worked day and night for Christ and the souls of men, and then, with shattered health and a broken constitution that often brought him into deep religious gloom, he entered into the rest and glory of the saints.

Whitefield had now (1748) arrived from his itinerant labors in the West Indies and North America, and again carried the torch of the gospel over England and Scotland.

He found an ardent friend in Lady Huntingdon, who wished him to preach at her mansion near London. This remarkable woman was a worthy co-laborer with Wesley and Whitefield. She had embraced the Calvinistic faith, but still she retained her warm regard for Wesley, and

rejoiced in his success in saving souls and reforming the nation. The Countess during a severe spell of sickness had thought deeply on religious subjects, and through the influence of Lady Margaret Hastings, her sister-in-law, had been brought to a strong sympathy with the Methodists. The Earl of Huntingdon was much concerned about his wife's condition and called upon Bishop Benson, who had ordained Whitefield, to try and restore her to a "saner" state of mind. He failed to do so, and in the presence of the Countess expressed his regret that he had ever ordained such a man as Whitefield. To this she replied, "Mark my words, my lord; when upon your dying bed that will be one of the ordinations upon which you will reflect with pleasure."

Her words were fulfilled. When the good Bishop came to die, he sent Whitefield a present of ten guineas, and asked an interest in his prayers.

Lady Huntingdon, after the death of her husband, gave herself fully to the work of the Lord. She gave away in money to the cause of religion more than half a million of dollars. By selling her jewels she raised means to build many chapels for the poor. She gave up her fine equipage, and discharged her liveried servants, that she might have more money for God's cause. She bought theatres, halls, and tumble-down chapels in different cities, and fitted them up for public worship. She travelled a great deal herself, and by her example stirred up preachers and people to greater activity and zeal. She bought an old castle at Trevecca, in Wales, and had it fitted up as a college for the training of preachers, and Rev. Joseph Benson, afterwards a leading Wesleyan minister and author of a Commentary, was one of the instructors. The saintly Fletcher was the first president of the institution. Here young men who felt called to

preach, and promised to devote themselves to the work of the ministry, either in the Established Church or among the Dissenters, were cordially received and provided with board, tuition and clothing, at the expense of the Countess.

By her influence the gospel was brought to the hearts of many of the nobility of England, and not a few of them owned and rejoiced in its saving power.

This holy woman lived and labored for Christ to her eighty-fourth year, and died exclaiming, "My work is done. I have nothing to do but to go to my Father." She left for charities twenty thousand dollars, and the remainder of her fortune to keep up the various chapels she had established.

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, lives in history as one of the holy women of the Church of God.

Soon after the Conference of 1748, which met at London, Wesley opened or rather enlarged his famous Kingswood school. He had had a school there since 1740, but now, having received from a generous lady \$4,000 for that purpose, he determined to enlarge the institution and give it more of an academic form. It was designed as a place of instruction for the sons of preachers and of those Methodists who were able to give their children better training than they could receive in the schools of the villages and towns. It is a matter of interest to notice the object and the rules of this school as Wesley gives them. The object was "to train up children in every branch of useful learning." Only boarding scholars were admitted between the years of six and twelve; and they were to be taught reading, writing, arithmetic, English, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, history, geography, chronology, rhetoric, logic, ethics, geometry, algebra, physics, and music. A pretty heavy course for

children between the ages of six and twelve. They were all to be brought up in the fear of God and at the utmost distance from vice in general, so in particular from idleness and effeminacy. "The children of *tender* parents so called," says Wesley, "who are indeed offering up their sons and their daughters unto devils, have no business here; for the rules will not be broken in favor of any person whatsoever. Nor is any child received unless his parents agree that he shall observe all the rules of the house; and that they will not take him from school, no, not a day, till they take him for good and all." With Wesley, in regard to his rules, we feel sure many will differ. We give them as a matter of history, and leave comments to others.

The Kingswood bill of fare could not be complained of. It was solid and good, and ran thus: Bacon, beef, and mutton, bread and butter, greens, water gruel, and apple dumplings. The pupils went to bed at 8 o'clock, and slept on mattresses. They were to rise at 4 o'clock the year round, and spend an hour in private, reading, singing, meditating, and praying. No play days nor playing was allowed, on the ground that he that plays when a boy will play when a man. Every healthy child was to fast on Friday until three o'clock in the afternoon. At five in the morning they had public religious services and again at seven in the evening. Breakfast was at six; at seven school began; at eleven the children walked or worked; at twelve dinner, and then they worked in the garden or sang till one. From one till five they were again in school; from five till six was the hour for private prayer; for an hour after they again walked or worked. At seven they had supper of bread and butter, and milk by turns, and at eight were all put to bed. The Sunday exercises were, breakfast at six, at seven

learn hymns or poems, at eight public service, at nine attend the parish church, at one dinner, after that singing, at two public service again, at four private instruction. The whole cost of a scholar for board and tuition was seventy dollars a year.

After the school went into operation on this basis, Wesley complained that his rules were often broken. Is it wonderful that they should be? But still he had reason to rejoice in the school. The housekeeper wrote to him, "The spirit of this family is a resemblance of the household above. They are given up to God, and pursue but the one great end. If God continue to bless us, one of these little ones shall chase a thousand."

Wesley was ever at work preaching, writing, and instructing people and preachers. At Kingswood he collected seventeen of his preachers, formed them into classes, and read them lectures every day during Lent. To one class he read Pearson on the Creed, to the other Aldrich's Logic, and to both Rules for Action and Utterance. For the instruction of his people he prepared with immense labor "A Christian Library," which consisted of the choicest pieces of practical divinity published in the English language, and finally reached the number of thirty volumes. Wesley worked at this huge task everywhere, on horseback, at wayside taverns and other places where he tarried for a night. Six years he spent in this work, and in the meanwhile wrote his Notes on the New Testament, prepared books for his Kingswood school, and preached almost daily. Such work is almost unparalleled in the history of the Christian Church.

Among the tracts which Wesley published was "Directions Concerning Pronunciation and Gesture." It was meant for his preachers who needed careful in-

struction in public speaking. In this tract Wesley says: "A good pronunciation is nothing but a natural, easy, and graceful variation of the voice, suitable to the nature and importance of the sentiments we deliver. The first business of a speaker is so to speak that he may be heard and understood with ease." Those whose voices are weak are recommended to strengthen them by "reading or speaking something aloud for at least half an hour every morning." The chief faults of public speaking are set down as the speaking too loud, speaking too low, which Wesley regarded as the worse fault of the two; speaking in a thick, cluttering manner, mumbling and swallowing words and syllables, to cure which Demosthenes spoke every day with pebbles in his mouth; the speaking too fast, a common fault, but not a little one; the speaking too slow; the speaking with an irregular, desultory and uneven voice. "The greatest fault of all," says Wesley, "is the speaking with a tone—in some instances womanish and squeaking; in others, singing or canting; in others, high, swelling, and theatrical; in others, awful and solemn; and in others, odd, whimsical, and whining."

Wesley thought it harder for a man to find out the faults of his gestures than of his pronunciation, for the reason that he can hear his own voice but cannot see his own face. He actually recommends the use of a large looking glass after the example of Demosthenes, or better still, to have some good pattern in view. He gave quite minute directions as to the motions of the body, the head, the face, the eyes, the mouth, the hands. He said a speaker should never turn his mouth awry, nor bite nor lick his lips, shrug his shoulders, nor lean upon his elbow, nor ever clap his hands, nor thump the pulpit. He thought the hands should seldom be lifted higher

than the eyes, and their perpetual motion be avoided, which the ancients called "The babbling of the hands."

It would not be amiss if public speakers now would give more attention to these rules of Wesley. He was himself one of the most forcible and impressive preachers that ever lived, and while his manner was quiet and orderly, his sermons were so powerful that thousands fell under them in the awful pangs of conviction. Whitefield was an impassioned orator, but more people fell under the calm power of Wesley's sermons than under his fiery appeals.

The Conference of 1749 was held at London in November. The chief subject discussed was the possibility of making a general union of all the Societies of the kingdom.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YEAR 1750 is famous for an earthquake in England, and for the great excitement which it caused among the people of London and other places. On the 8th of February, in the midst of the rush of business, the people of London were startled by the shock. One month after, a second and more violent one was felt. A few days later, another was felt in different parts of the kingdom, and the people were almost wild with alarm. A half crazy soldier prophesied that on the 4th of April there would be a shock which would destroy half of London. Many people believed him, and when the time came, the open squares of the city were filled with thousands of men, women, and children, who had rushed out of the houses that they expected to fall to pieces about their heads. They spent many hours huddled together in groups in utter darkness and under inclement skies waiting for the predicted doom of the city. Many ran frantic through the streets expecting every moment to hear the blast of the last trumpet. Churches and chapels were crowded full, while hundreds pressed to the doors for admittance. In three days seven hundred coaches were counted full of people flying into the open country. Many ladies made themselves woollen gowns in which to keep warm while they sat out all night awaiting the earthquake and the final judgment. At midnight, in darkness intense and surrounded by frightened multitudes, Whitefield stood on a table in Hyde Park and preached a powerful sermon on the general judgment.

In the midst of the early part of the earthquake ex-

citement Wesley was in London holding fast days and watch nights among the Methodists, and striving to calm the fears of the people by urging them to trust in the living God.

Wesley now prepared to make another visit to Ireland. He and Christopher Hopper rode on horseback across the Welsh mountains to Holyhead, where they were to embark. The trip across the mountains was terrible. Rain fell in torrents, and the wind was so violent as nearly to blow them off their horses. In a cottage where they rested a few hours, Wesley spent the time in translating Aldrich's Logic. At the seaport they met John Jane, a noble itinerant, who had set out on his work with three shillings in his pocket. Five months afterwards he died exclaiming "I have found the love of God in Christ Jesus." All the money he had when he died was one shilling and fourpence. "Enough," says Wesley, "for an unmarried preacher of the gospel to leave to his executors." When Wesley reached Ireland, he was met by brutal mobs. One night, as he was about to preach in a private house, a drunken crowd rushed in, struck the man of the house, kicked his wife, and with horrid oaths demanded, "Where is the parson?" Wesley was in another room, the door of which was thrust open, and a burly fellow mounted a chair to look for Wesley on the bed tester, but fell heavily to the floor and soon left the place. The ruffian rallied his men and broke into the house a second time. A young girl met him in the passage with a pail of water and drenched him from head to foot; he cried Murder! murder! and, when he found himself locked in, begged piteously that they would let him out, and gave his word that he would take his rabble away. Irish women are said to be gifted in quarrelling, and Wesley records a

curious experience with two female termagants. They talked for three hours until they almost distracted themselves and him. "I perceived," he says, "there was no remedy but prayer; so a few of us wrestled with God for above two hours." The case was settled by three hours' quarrelling by the women and two hours' praying by Wesley and his friends—"anger gave place to love, and the quarrelsome ladies fell upon each other's neck."

The violence shown against the Methodists in Ireland could hardly be credited, if the statements were not proven by credible witnesses. Wesley wrote to a friend in England, "That any of the Methodist preachers are alive is a clear proof of an overruling Providence; for we know not when we are safe. A week or two ago, in a time of perfect peace, twenty people assaulted one of our preachers, and a few that were riding with him, near Limerick. He asked their captain what they intended to do, who calmly answered, 'To murder you!' and accordingly presented a pistol, which snapped twice or thrice. Mr. Fenwick then rode away. The other pursued, and fired after him, but could not overtake him. Three of his companions they left for dead."

But Wesley had reason to rejoice in the work in Ireland. He says many sinners were saved who had been famous for wickedness. Many Roman Catholics were converted, and some of them became eminent Christians.

Among the many incidents that Wesley gives of this visit we notice, for the special benefit of our young readers, the following account of a little boy. Of this boy, whose name was Richard Hutchinson, his mother gave Wesley this account: When he was about four years old he began to talk much about God, and to ask many questions about him. He grew very serious, and if any one swore or used bad words in his presence he would re-

prove them. He was much troubled about his brother, who was three years older, and would say, "I fear my brother will go to hell, for he does not love God." His mother cut off his hair, and he said to her, "You cut off my hair because you are afraid I shall have the small-pox; but I am not afraid. I am not afraid to die, for I love God." Some weeks before he was taken with that disease, he sent for some of the members and said he must take leave of them, and did so in a very tender and affectionate manner. He soon after fell ill, and became light headed, but nearly all the time he was repeating parts of hymns, uttering short prayers, or exhorting the people that came to see him. As he grew worse he seemed anxious to go home, and kept saying, "I must go home; I will go home." One said to him, "You are at home." He replied, "No, this is not my home. I will go to heaven." On the tenth day of his sickness he raised himself up and said, "Let me go, let me go to my Father; I will go home; now, now I will go to my Father." He then lay down, and in a few moments died and went home to his Father.

On returning to England Wesley encountered a furious storm, in the midst of which he tried with success the power of prayer. Near midnight he was aroused by a great noise, and he found that the ship was in a squall of wind, thunder and rain. The sailors were at their wits' end. They could not see across the ship except when the lightning glared. They took in sail and let the ship drive. "It was intensely dark," says Wesley, "and neither the captain nor any man else knew where we were; only that we were tossing in a narrow channel full of shoals, and rocks, and sands. But does not God hear the prayer? [They had prayed in the earlier part of the passage, and the storm had calmed.] Mr. Hopper

and I believed it our duty to make the trial again; and in a very few moments the wind was small, the sea fell, and the clouds dispersed; so we put up a little sail, and went on quietly and slowly till the morning dawned." Wesley was a man of prayer, and he believed in it for everything. In the midst of this storm he says it was much on his mind, "They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distress." "I knew not," he says, "why we should not call upon him as well as they."

Wesley found the work spreading on every side when he reached England. He at once began his work of preaching and inspecting the Societies. At one place he preached in a meadow, "full of people from side to side, and many stood in the gardens and orchards round." At Shaftsbury a Constable came to him and said, "Sir, the mayor discharges you from preaching in this borough any more." Wesley's reply was, "While King George gives me leave to preach, I shall not ask leave of the mayor of Shaftsbury."

In the year 1751 John Wesley was married. He had remained single, he said, because he believed that he could be more useful in a single than in a married state. He now thought he could be more useful as a married man, and so deciding he entered upon what proved to be a very stormy married life with a woman every way unworthy of such a man. The woman was a Mrs. Vazeille, and the period of the courtship seems to have been very brief. Wesley was to set out on one of his long preaching tours to the North of England, but the day before he was to start he slipped on the ice while crossing London Bridge and severely sprained and bruised one of his legs. He went into the church and preached, and tried to preach again at night, but the pain was so great he was

unable to do so. He then went to the house of Mrs. Vazeille, where he spent a week or more, "partly," he says, "in prayer, reading, conversation, and partly in writing a Hebrew grammar, and Lessons for Children. He had known this lady for some time, and she had been recommended to him by some of his ardent friends, as a person who would make him a suitable wife. The Sunday after he was "carried to the Foundery and preached kneeling;" and a day or two after, while still a cripple, he was married to Mrs. Vazeille, she being forty-one and Wesley forty-eight years old. He preached again several times during the week on his knees. "This," says Mr. Tyerman, "was an odd beginning—the bridegroom crippled, and, instead of making a wedding tour, preaching on his knees in London chapels." Two weeks afterwards he went off to Bristol to hold a Conference, leaving his wife at home. After the session he returned to London, and after six days set out for Scotland. It was at this time he wrote in his Journal, "I cannot understand how a Methodist preacher can answer it to God, to preach one sermon, or travel one day less, in a married than in a single state. In this respect, surely, 'it remaineth that they who have wives be as though they had none.'" Wesley's wife travelled with him for a while, but she soon grew tired of such a life, and instead of being a help became an actual torment to him. She had a stubborn will and a high temper, and was cruelly jealous of him; after an unhappy union of twenty years, she left his house never to return. Wesley had tried in every way to make her a good and useful woman, and a proper wife, but all his efforts, as well as those of his friends, were fruitless—so when she left him, he entered in his Journal, "January 23, 1771. For what cause I know not, my wife set out for Newcastle, purposing never

to return. *I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her,*”—and he never did. And thus closed a long and sorrowful episode in the life of this good and great man.

This year, 1751, Wesley for the first time visited Scotland. He went to Edinburgh, which he described as “one of the dirtiest cities he had ever seen.” He preached several times with some success, and returned to England leaving Christopher Hopper to preach to the Scots. Methodism did not succeed among the Scottish people as it did in Ireland and England. Charles Wesley said he talked with a preacher who had preached many weeks without seeing one soul converted. Whitefield said to Wesley, “You have no business in Scotland. Your principles are so well known that, if you spoke like an angel, none would hear you; and if they did, you would have nothing to do but to dispute with one and another from morning to night.” To this Wesley replied, “If God sends me, people will hear. And I will give them no provocation to dispute; for I will studiously avoid all controverted points, and keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity. And if any still begin to dispute, they may; but I will not dispute with them.” Wesley continued his work, and Methodism was at last successful in Scotland, though not to the extent which attended it in other countries.

Cornwall was a favorite section of England for Methodism, and Wesley gave it much of his labor. At some places the behavior of the people under the force of example, even from the parsons of the Established Church, was of the most outrageous character. At Tiverton he went to hear a sermon, but “such insufferable noise and confusion he never saw before in a place of worship; no, not even in a Jewish synagogue. The clergy set the ex-

ample, laughing and talking during great part both of the prayers and sermon." The next day Wesley preached, and a rabble came with horns, drums and fifes, and made all the noise they could. They caught a poor chimney sweeper, supposing he was a Methodist, carried him off and beat him nearly to death. The worthy mayor of the place swore that there was no need of a new religion in Tiverton. He said, "There is the old church and the new church; that is one religion. Then there is parson K—'s, at the Pitt meeting, and parson W—'s, in Peter Street, and old parson T—'s, at the meeting in Newport Street,—four ways of going to heaven already; enough in all conscience; and if the people won't go to heaven by one or the other of these ways—they shan't go to heaven at all while I am mayor of Tiverton."

But notwithstanding the purpose of the mayor of Tiverton, many did determine to try to go to heaven by the Methodist way.

In the year 1752, Whitefield returned from America, and set about the work of building his famous Tabernacle in Moorfields. It was completed in due course of time, and became the headquarters of Calvinistic Methodism as the Foundery was of Arminian Methodism.

Among the itinerants of Wesley some signs of discontent began to appear by reason, probably, of too free talk about one another. To stop the spread of ill-feeling in the very opening of the year, the following rules were drawn up and signed by Wesley and a number of his preachers: "1. That we will not listen to, or willingly inquire after any ill concerning each other. 2. That, if we do hear any ill of each other, we will not be forward to believe it. 3. That, as soon as possible, we will communicate what we hear, by speaking or writing to the person concerned. 4. That, till we have done this, we

will not write or speak a syllable of it to any other person whatever. 5. That, neither will we mention it, after we have done this, to any other person. 6. That we will not make any exception to any of these rules, unless we think ourselves absolutely obliged in conscience to do so."

These are noble rules. How many disputes, ruinous to brotherly charity and the peace of the church, might be avoided by following the example of Wesley and his preachers.

Wesley was a very calm speaker, and not a loud one, we should think, as he says that when he preached out of doors at Birstal he was heard distinctly by persons who were one hundred and forty yards distant. At Wakefield he preached to a serious people, and said, "Who would have expected to see me preaching in Wakefield church, to so attentive a congregation, when, a few years ago, all the people were as roaring lions? and the honest man did not dare to let me preach in his yard, lest the mob should pull down his houses."

At Hull he preached to "a huge multitude, rich and poor, horse and foot, with several coaches." Thousands listened well, "but many behaved as if possessed by Moloch." Clods and stones flew on every side. A lady invited Wesley and his wife into her carriage, in which there were already seven persons. "There were nine of us in the coach," says Wesley, "three on each side and three in the middle. The mob closely attended us, throwing in at the windows whatever came next to hand; but a large gentlewoman, who sat in my lap, screened me, so that nothing came near me." When they reached their lodgings the windows were smashed, and until late in the night the mob howled and cursed and threw stones and brickbats against the house.

This year, 1752, Wesley again visited Ireland and held his first Irish Conference. There were ten preachers present, and as there had been some expression of doctrine not in agreement with Wesleyan theology, it was resolved to employ no man in future as a helper unless he "thoroughly agreed to both Methodist doctrine and discipline." It was also decided that if a man could not preach twice a day he should be only a local preacher—that the congregations must always kneel in prayer, and stand in singing and while the text was read, and must be serious and silent while the service lasted, and when coming and going away.

The preachers were to have at least \$40 a year, and, if possible, \$50 a year for clothing; and the latter sum was allowed for each preacher's wife. Preachers were to preach often on fasting, and were to practice it, if health allowed, every Friday. They were to avoid luxury and idleness, and were to spend one hour every day in secret prayer.

Among the six preachers admitted at the Irish Conference was Philip Guier, whose name is associated with American Methodism. In the neighborhood of Ballingran a number of Germans from the Palatinate on the Rhine had settled, and though they were at first a sober and steady people, yet, having no service in their own language, they fell into the worst habits and became a swearing, drunken, and wholly irreligious community. One man among them remained faithful; this was Philip Guier. He was their school teacher, and by him Philip Embury, who introduced Methodism into America, was taught to read and write. He was also the instrument of leading that remarkable man, Thomas Walsh, to the knowledge of Jesus. Guier was appointed a local preacher among the Palatines; he maintained himself

by his school, but gave all the time he could spare to the work of preaching. He was greatly beloved by his people, and after the lapse of a hundred years his name is familiar to the descendants of the old German settlers. As the circuit preacher now jogs along in that part of Ireland he is greeted with the cry, "There goes Philip Guier, who drove the devil out of Ballingran!" This good man reformed his people by his earnest and faithful labors, and when he died Wesley said of him, "He was ■ father to the German Societies, loving and cherishing them as his own children. He retained all his faculties to the last, and after two days' illness went to God."

Wesley opened the year 1753 by carefully inspecting the prisons in London. Of the Marshalsea prison, in which debtors were confined, he wrote, "A nursery of all manner of wickedness. O shame to man, that there should be such a picture of hell upon earth! And shame to those who bear the name of Christ, that there should be any prison in all Christendom." The scenes he saw among the sick, poor, and the prisoners, were really sickening, and it was to such that Wesley went as an angel of mercy. "Who," he asks, "could see such scenes unmoved?" If any of the Indians in Georgia were sick, those that were near them gave them whatever they wanted. Oh, who will convert the English into honest heathen! I found some in their cells under ground; others in their garrets half starved with cold and hunger; but I found not one of them unemployed who was able to crawl about the room. So wickedly, devilishly false is that common objection, 'They are poor, only because they are idle.' If you saw these things with your own eyes, could you lay out money in ornaments and superfluities?"

Wesley was always ready to turn everything to good account, and to make it help him in his great work. Scientific men had lately been called to the study of electricity by the experiments of Dr. Franklin. Wesley gave the subject much careful thought, and believing that electricity was a valuable remedial agent, he procured an apparatus and began to electrify persons for various disorders. His patients increased in number, and while in London he spent an hour every day in trying "the virtue of this surprising medicine." He says, "Hundreds, perhaps thousands, have received unspeakable good; and I have not known one man, woman or child who has received any hurt thereby; so that when I hear any speak of the danger of being electrified (especially if they are medical men who talk so), I cannot but impute it to great want either of sense or honesty. We know it is a thousand medicines in one; in particular, that it is the most efficacious medicine in nervous diseases of every kind which has ever been discovered."

It is remarkable that Wesley gave his preachers advice about preaching that he seldom took himself. In a letter to a friend he says, "It is a constant rule with us that no preacher should preach above twice a day, unless on Sunday or some extraordinary time; then he may preach three times. We know that nature cannot long bear the preaching oftener than this, and, therefore, to do it is a degree of self-murder. Those of the preachers who would not follow this advice have all repented when it was too late. I likewise advise all our preachers not to preach above an hour at a time, prayer and all,—and not to speak louder than the number of hearers requires. You may show this to all our preachers, and any that desire it may take a copy of it."

CHAPTER XII.

THE CONFERENCE of 1753 was held at Leeds in May. Two clergymen of the Church besides Wesley, twenty-five itinerant and sixteen local preachers, were present. The question was asked, "Does every one know the exact time when he was justified?" The answer was, "It is possible he may not know what to call it, when he experiences this; especially if he has not been accustomed to hear the scriptural doctrine concerning it. And the change then wrought in some may not be so sudden, or so observable as it is in others. But, generally, wherever the gospel is preached in a clear and scriptural manner, more than ninety-nine in a hundred do know the exact time when they are justified." It was resolved to preach strongly and closely on inward and outward holiness; also to discourage the marriage of Methodists with unbelievers. It was fully determined that in future all who were guilty of Sabbath breaking, dram drinking, evil speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, and contracting debts without a probability of paying them, should be put out of Society. There were twelve circuits supplied by the two Wesleys and thirty-seven helpers. After the Conference closed, Wesley began his work anew, and in three days preached ten or more sermons, until by the enormous labor his voice began to fail him; but he moved on, saying in his weakness to a friend, "I hope my life, rather than my tongue, says, I desire only to spend and be spent in the work."

Hard work told on the great worker. In November he was seized with a cold which left him with a "pain in

his left breast, a violent cough, and a slow fever." His physician required him to leave the city and go into the country, saying, good Quaker as he was, "If anything does thee good, it must be the country air, with rest, asses' milk, and riding daily." He was at once removed to the house of Mr. Ebenezer Blackwell at Lewisham, where he remained for five weeks. On the evening of the arrival he composed his epitaph. "Not knowing," he says, "how it might please God to dispose of me, to prevent vile panegyric, I wrote as follows :

Here lieth the Body
of

JOHN WESLEY,

A Brand plucked out of the burning ;

Who died of a Consumption in the Fifty-first year

Of his Age,

not leaving, after his Debts are paid,

Ten Pounds behind him :

Praying,

"God be merciful to me an unprofitable servant."

He ordered that this, if any, inscription should be
placed on his tombstone.

The news of Wesley's illness spread through the country, and awakened the deepest sympathy. Charles hurried to see him, and found him better, but thought him "still in imminent danger, being far gone, and very suddenly, in a consumption." When he returned to London he preached at the Foundery on the power of prayer, and said he believed if his brother was raised up it would be in answer to the prayer of faith. As soon as Whitefield heard of it, he wrote to his old friend, "If seeing you so weak when leaving London distressed me, the

news and prospect of your approaching dissolution have quite weighed me down. I pity myself and the church, but not you. A radiant throne awaits you, and ere long you will enter into your Master's joy. Yonder he stands with a massy crown, ready to put it on your head amidst an admiring throng of saints and angels; but I, poor I, who have been waiting for my dissolution these nineteen years, must be left behind. Well! this is my comfort, it cannot be long ere the chariot will be sent even for worthless me. If prayers can detain them, even you, reverend and very dear sir, shall not leave us yet; but if the decree is gone forth, that you must now fall asleep in Jesus, may he kiss your soul away, and give you to die in the embraces of triumphant love. If in the land of the dying, I hope to pay my respects to you next week. If not, reverend and dear sir, F-a-r-e-w-e-ll!"

In this touching letter, the great evangelist seemed to think only of his dying friend. They had differed in opinion on doctrines, but now as the one appeared to be nearing the heavenly land, the heart of the other poured out its love in words of surpassing tenderness. On the same day on which he wrote this letter to Wesley he said to another friend, "The physicians think Mr. John Wesley's disease is a galloping consumption. I pity the church, I pity myself, but not him. We must stay behind in this cold climate, whilst he takes his flight to a radiant throne. Lord, if it be Thy blessed will, let not Thy chariot-wheels be long in coming."

But the work of John Wesley was far from being done, and, contrary to the sad expectation of his friends, he gradually regained his health.

In the opening of the year 1754 he was at the Bristol Hot wells, feeble but gaining strength daily, and even hard at work. The first Sunday of this year he began

writing his "Notes on the New Testament,"—"a work," he says, "which I should scarce ever have attempted had I not been so ill as not to be able to travel and preach, and yet so well as to be able to read and write." Weak as he was, he spent sixteen hours a day on this work. In ten weeks the translation, and the notes on the gospels, were completed. He went to the village of Paddington, near London, and spent nearly three months in writing. Several months Wesley spent in much needed retirement and silence. In the Spring he began to preach occasionally, but he was not what he had been, and writes with a shade of sadness, "I have not recovered my whole voice or strength; perhaps I never may, but let me use what I have." Wesley could not be an idle man. He was a worker, and a plain, earnest one too. In regard to a good style in writing and speaking, he said: "What is it that constitutes a good style? Perspicuity, purity, propriety, strength, and easiness joined together. When one of these is wanting, it is not a good style. As for me, I never think of my style at all; but just set down the words that come first. Only when I transcribe anything for the press, then I think it my duty to see that every phrase be clear, pure and proper. Conciseness, which is now, as it were, natural to me, brings *quantum sufficit* of strength. If, after all, I observe any stiff expression, I throw it out, neck and shoulders. Clearness, in particular, is necessary for you and me; because we are to instruct people of the lowest understanding. We should constantly use the most common, little, easy words (so they are pure and proper) which our language affords. When I had been a member of the university about ten years, I wrote and talked much as you do now. But when I talked to plain people in the castle, or the town, I observed they gaped and stared

—this quickly obliged me to alter my style, and adopt the language of those I spoke to. And yet there is a dignity in this simplicity which is not disagreeable to those of the highest rank.”

Wesley was an example of his own rule to his preachers, “never be unemployed, never be triflingly employed.” To one who wrote for advice as to his studies, he said, “I suppose you to rise not later than five; to allow an hour in the morning and another in the evening for private exercises; an hour before dinner and another in the afternoon for walking; and to go to bed between nine and ten.”

Wesley was in a very feeble state of health nearly the whole of the year 1754, but he crowded as much of riding, preaching and writing into it as most men would do in full health.

In the Spring of 1755 he set out on one of his long preaching tours. In his journey he visited Rev. William Baddiley, who, like Grimshaw, had formed a number of Societies, and employed several lay preachers to help him in his work. Just before Wesley came to his house, one of his daughters had died, and Wesley was asked to conduct her funeral. In the course of his sermon he had occasion to refer to the passage, “There is a time to dance,” and said, “I know no such time, except it be a time analogous to that in which David danced before the ark”—and he added, “Be careful that you do not dance yourselves into hell.” This remark gave great offence to some lovers of dancing, and to spite the Methodists they at once established a dancing school. They met at the village ale-house, and the only child of the keeper, a little boy, was much distressed when the fiddling and dancing began. He cried and said, “I’ll not stay here; I’ll go home.” He ran away into the fields, and when some

one met him and asked where he was going, he said, "Home." At the next dance he was shut up in the kitchen for safety, but he got out and was afterwards found dead in the river.

Until this year Wesley had never visited Liverpool. That famous city at that time merely skirted the river Mersey, and the Methodists were a feeble folk worshipping in a poor chapel in a dirty street. Forty years after this visit of Wesley matters had not improved much. Adam Clarke was the preacher, and spoke of his house as being "neither in hell nor purgatory, yet in a place of torment." "But where is it?" asked his friend. "You must go," said he, "down Dale street, then along East street, and when you are up to the middle in clay and mud, call out lustily for Adam Clarke."

Methodists must never despise the day of small things. In this great city Methodism is now rich and powerful.

The Conference for this year was held at Leeds. It was the largest that had been held. There were sixty-three preachers present. The Conference discussed the question of separation from the Church, and on the third day, after much serious thought and talk, it was agreed that "whether lawful or not, it was not expedient." At the close of the Conference, Wesley spoke very plainly to his preachers. It had been said that they were not as much alive in religion as they had been. He said he had reason to fear it was the case with some of them, and to stir them up he addressed to them some pointed questions. "Who of you," asked the great leader, "is exemplarily alive to God, so as to carry fire with him wherever he goes? Who of you is a pattern of self-denial even in little things? Who of you drinks water? Why not? Who rises at four? Why not? Who fasts on Friday? Why not? Who has not four meals a day?

Who goes through his work willingly and diligently? never on any account disappointing a congregation? Who has every part of the plan at heart? Who preaches the old thundering doctrine, No faith without light? Who constantly and zealously enforces practical religion? relative duties? recommends books? Who is never idle? Is your whole heart in the work? Do not you give way to unconcern, indolence, and fear of man?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE YEAR 1755 was one of trouble to Methodists. The great question that agitated them was, Shall we separate from the Established Church? There had been a growing dissatisfaction among them for years; in many instances they had been repelled from the sacramental tables in the Establishment, and were forced to the alternative of receiving the communion in the Dissenting Chapels, or of omitting it altogether. Charles Wesley was a rigid churchman, and was horrified at the idea of the Methodist preachers being authorized to administer the Lord's Supper. Some of the ablest of the Wesleyan preachers, such as Thomas Walsh and Joseph Cownley, contended that the Methodists were entitled to the sacraments of the Christian church.

The whole question was discussed for three days in the Conference, and it was decided "that whether it was lawful or not, it was not expedient for the Methodists to separate from the Established Church."

The arguments in favor of separation Wesley confesses he could not answer to his own satisfaction, and he declared it as his conviction that rather than give up open air preaching, extemporaneous prayer, forming regular Societies, and the sending of unordained men to preach, he would leave the Church of England.

Having settled, at least for a time, the vexed question of separation, Wesley went on with his great work of writing and preaching. Whitefield came from America, and renewed his work in England with his undying fervor. "The poor, despised Methodists," he says, "are

as lively as ever; and, in several churches, the gospel is now preached with power." He met with Wesley in London, and says, "Disputings are now no more; we love one another, and join hand in hand to promote the cause of our common Master."

Near the close of this year a man appeared in England who was destined to fill a high place in the history of Methodism. John Fletcher was born at Nyon, Switzerland, September 12, 1729, of a distinguished family. He was educated at Geneva, and at an early age became an accurate scholar in languages and other liberal studies. He was designed for the ministry, but he determined to become a soldier and entered the army of Portugal as a captain. After a brief military life, he went to England and was employed as tutor in the family of Thomas Hill, Esq., of Shropshire. He was converted in 1755, and two years afterwards took orders in the Church of England. In his first charge he found "too much time and too little labor," and took Madeley parish, which gave him only half as much as Dunham which he had resigned. Here he met at first the severest opposition from the ungodly gentry and the poor, rude parishioners. But he went on in his work with a zeal, gentleness and love that finally bore down all opposition. His generosity to the poor almost exceeds belief. He stinted himself that he might feed them; he wore the cheapest clothing that he might clothe them; he kept his house bare that he might supply comforts to the suffering families of his parish. It is not wonderful that his people learned to love him and to look upon his visits as those of an angel of God. In 1770, at the request of Lady Huntingdon, he took charge of her College at Trevecca. Joseph Benson, who was associated with him in the school, has drawn a portrait of Fletcher in the following words: "The reader will

pardon me if he thinks I exceed ; my heart kindles while I write.

“Here it was that I saw, shall I say, an angel in human flesh. I should not far exceed the truth if I said so. But here I saw a descendant of fallen Adam so fully raised above the ruins of the fall, that though by the body he was tied down to earth, yet was his whole *conversation in heaven*; yet was his life *hid with Christ in God*. Prayer, praise, love, and zeal, all ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty, were the elements in which he continually lived. Languages, arts, sciences, grammar, rhetoric, logic, even divinity itself, as it is called, were all laid aside when he appeared in the school room among the students. And they seldom hearkened long before they were all in tears, and every heart caught fire from the flame that burned in his soul.” Oh, what a man he must have been to merit such a tribute ! Wesley truly had help from God when Fletcher came, led by the Divine hand, and cast in his lot with the Methodists.

The first of November, 1755, the city of Lisbon, in Portugal, was nearly destroyed by an earthquake. In six minutes a large portion of the city was destroyed, and 60,000 persons were killed. The year previous Whitefield had visited this place on his way to America, and staid there nearly a month. It is a city where the Roman Catholics hold supreme rule, and at that day they indulged in shows and processions perhaps beyond what they do now. Whitefield wrote an account of what he saw. The following is a description of a Good Friday procession given by Tyerman in his life of Wesley from Whitefield’s pamphlet :

“One of these was led by three popish dignitaries in scarlet clothes, followed by two little boys with wings

fixed on their shoulders to make them resemble angels. Then came several images of St. Francis; then an image of our Saviour, with long black hair, and dressed in a purple gown; and then the virgin mother, to whom St. Francis rendered homage. After this, followed a mitred cardinal gaudily attired; a gorgeous friar under a splendid canopy; and then a long train of fat Franciscans. Another procession consisted of nearly two hundred penitents, all clothed in white, their faces veiled, their feet bare, and chains fastened to their ankles; some having on their backs great stones; others carrying in their hands dead men's bones and skulls; some bearing upon their shoulders a heavy cross; and most lashing themselves with cords, or beating themselves with iron rods. In one of the churches, Whitefield found a solid silver altar of several yards circumference, and about twelve steps high. In another, he met with a golden altar, of nearly the same dimensions, its base studded with precious stones, each step lit up with large lighted silver candlesticks, and the top adorned with silver images of angels. In a large church, belonging to the convent of St. De Beato, he mingled with many thousands in witnessing what was meant to be a representation of the crucifixion of the Son of God. Upon a high scaffold were three full-sized figures of the blessed Saviour and of the crucified malefactors. At a little distance was the holy Virgin, in long ruffles and widow's weeds, her face veiled with purple silk, and her head encircled with a crown of glory. At the foot of the Saviour's cross, lay, in a mournful posture, a living man, dressed in woman's clothes, personating Mary Magdalene; while near at hand was a younger man, arrayed in a bob-wig and a green silk vesture, representing the apostle John. On each side, stood two sentinels in buff, with formidable

caps and beards; and, directly in front, a personation of the Roman centurion, with a large target in his hand. From behind the purple hangings came twenty purple-vested boys, all wearing golden caps, and adorned with wings, and each one bearing a lighted taper in his hand. Opposite to the stage, a black friar, mounted in a pulpit, preached a sort of fifteen minutes' sermon. Then came four long-bearded men, two of them carrying a ladder, and the other two, as the representatives of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, bearing large gilt dishes filled with spices. Amid great ceremony, the body of the Saviour was taken down; Mary Magdalene wrapped the feet in her wide-spread handkerchief; the beloved disciple clasped the corpse to his loving heart; shrouded in linen, it was carried round the churchyard in grand procession; and then, followed by the Virgin, Mary Magdalene, and St. John, and by a whole troop of friars, bearing wax tapers in their hands, was conducted to an open sepulchre, and buried. Thus ended the Good Friday's superstitious tragedy in the far famed Lisbon. A year and a half afterwards Lisbon was a heap of ruins."

Wesley was requested to write on this great calamity, and did so in a tract called "Serious Thoughts on the Earthquake at Lisbon." It was an eloquent and stirring production, and had a large sale. Wesley also published a small tract on a "Catholic Spirit," which really contained the principles of an evangelical alliance, showing that the great Methodist leader was so far in advance of his age as to stand upon the very ground on which Christians are now gathering in their much lauded alliances. If he found a man whose creed embraced a belief in the Trinity in Unity, love to God and man, and the practice of good works, he was ready to hail him as a Christian and a brother. He would not urge him to receive his

opinions nor to conform to his modes of worship. All he asked was, "If thine heart be as my heart, on the three great points named, give me thy hand."

Wesley's Notes on the New Testament were published in a quarto volume with his portrait. Of this portrait he gives this account:

"In 1744, while I was shaving, John Downes [one of his itinerants] was whittling the top of a stick. I asked, what are you doing? He answered, 'I am taking your face, which I intend to engrave on a copperplate.' Accordingly, without any instruction, he first made himself tools, and then engraved the plate. The second picture which he engraved was that which was prefixed to the 'Notes on the New Testament.' Such another instance, I suppose, not all England, or perhaps Europe, can produce."

This portrait of Wesley was pronounced one of the best that had ever been executed. Wesley said his Notes were written "chiefly for plain, unlettered men, who understand only their mother tongue, and yet reverence and love the word of God, and have a desire to save their souls." In reference to the translation of the original text, he says he "never altered for altering's sake, but only when, first, the sense was made better, stronger, clearer, or more consistent with the context, and, secondly, where, the sense being equally good, the phrase was better or nearer the original."

The great commentator, Dr. Adam Clarke, says of the work, "Though short, the notes are always judicious, accurate, spiritual, terse and impressive; and possess the happy and rare property of leading the reader immediately to God and his own heart."

The spirit of the Methodist preachers of the early days is shown by a remark of Whitefield when his doctor pre-

scribed for an attack of quinsy, "a perpetual blister;" the great preacher objected, saying he found a better remedy in "perpetual preaching."

He began to preach in a Dissenting chapel in London; the bishop of the diocese forbade him, but he persisted. A mob in which the bishop's vestry was represented met, and with "bells, drums, clappers, marrow bones, and cleavers, made a dreadful uproar to drown the preacher's voice. The windows were smashed by stones hurled at Whitefield's head. So far from being intimidated by these outrages, Whitefield at once began a new chapel, and in a few days he had raised \$3,000 for the purpose. The chapel was called by a facetious doctor, "Whitefield's Soul Trap."

Wesley at this time, 1756, had a correspondence with a man of good parts and high position as a preacher who afterwards came to a sad end. This was Dr. William Dodd, who attracted great crowds to his church in London. He wrote to Wesley on the subject of Christian Perfection, who replied, "When I began to make the Scriptures my study (about seven and twenty years ago), I began to see that Christians are called to love God with all their heart, and to serve him with all their strength; which is precisely what I apprehend to be meant by the scriptural term, 'perfection.'" Again he says in another letter: "That the term 'perfection' is a scriptural term, is undeniable. Therefore none ought to object to the use of the *term*, whatever they may do to this or that *application* of it. I still think, that perfection is only another term for holiness, or the image of God in man. God *made man perfect*, I think, is just the same as He made him *holy*, or in *His own image*. Now, *this perfection* does certainly admit of degrees. Therefore, I readily allow the propriety of that distinction,

perfection of kinds, and perfection of degrees. Nor do I remember one writer, ancient or modern, who excepts against it. I never meant any *more* by perfection than the loving God with all our heart, and serving Him with all our strength. But I dare not say *less* than this."

We must pass from this to a subject quite different, but showing Wesley to be as ardent a patriot as he was a Christian. War with France was expected, and the whole country was in excitement. Wesley actually wrote to the authorities offering "to raise for his majesty's service, at least two hundred volunteers, to be supported by contributions among themselves." There was no need for Wesley's volunteers, as the French invasion did not occur.

Wesley made a visit to Ireland this year, and vigorously pushed forward the work of Methodism. He visited the Palatines, and was greatly pleased with their piety and industry. "By their diligence," he says, "they turned all their land into a garden." But dark days came upon these good people, and many of them sought homes across the ocean. Four years after this date a company of these people sailed for America, and among them were Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, two names forever associated with the planting of Methodism in America.

Wesley spent nineteen weeks in Ireland, and in August returned to England and met his preachers in Conference at Bristol.

They reconsidered the rules of Society, which were read one by one, and they agreed to abide by them, "and to recommend them with all their might." The troublesome question of "Keeping in the Church," came up, and as at the previous Conference they decided not to break

from the Establishment. But it must be known that while Wesley proposed "never to separate" from the Church, he did not believe the episcopal form of church government to be prescribed in the Bible. On this subject he said in a letter to a friend: "I still believe the episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical. I mean well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles. But, that it is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's '*Irenicon*.' I think he has unanswerably shown, that neither Christ nor His apostles *prescribe* any particular form of church government; and, that the plea of *Divine right* for diocesan episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive church."

A number of Wesley's friends and advisers, with Chas. Wesley at their head, wished to have the Methodist preachers ordained and settled over parishes, and to employ no more itinerants without subjecting them to severe examinations. But John Wesley continued to send out his soundly converted men to show the perishing masses the way of life.

At the close of the Bristol Conference he wrote the following noble vindication of his course:

"A careless reader of the Address may think I make it necessary for a minister to have much learning; and thence imagine I act inconsistently, seeing many of our preachers have no learning at all. But the answer is easy. First, I do not make any learning necessary even for a minister,—the minister of a parish, who, as such, undertakes single to guide and feed, to instruct and govern, that whole flock—but the knowledge of the Scriptures; although many branches of learning are highly

expedient for him. Secondly, these preachers are not ministers ; none of them undertakes single the care of a whole flock, but ten, twenty, or thirty, one following and helping another ; and all, under the direction of my brother and me, undertake jointly what (as I judge) no man in England is equal to alone."

Wesley said he tolerated lay preaching because he believed without it thousands of souls would perish everlastingly.

Wesley was a great and careful reader of books. His notes on books are sometimes curious. After reading Voltaire's *Henriade*, he says, "I am more than ever convinced that the French is the poorest, meanest language in Europe ; that it is no more comparable to the German or Spanish, than a bagpipe is to an organ ; and that, with regard to poetry in particular, considering the incorrigible uncouthness of their measure, and their always writing in rhyme, it is as impossible to write a fine poem in French, as to make fine music on a jew's-harp."

CHAPTER XIV.

IN 1757 WHITEFIELD came near being murdered by an Irish mob. He went out to preach on a common near Dublin attended by a soldier and four preachers. As they left the ground hundreds of enraged papists gathered around them hurling volleys of stones; at almost every step Whitefield was struck until he was covered with blood. He expected to be killed, and like Stephen "to go off in this bloody triumph to the immediate presence of his Master." He found momentary refuge in the house of a minister, but the minister's wife begged him to go away, fearing the raging mob would pull down the house. A man lent him a wig and a cloak as a disguise, and a coach was brought by some of his friends into which he leaped and "rode in gospel triumph," he says, through the oaths, curses and imprecations of whole streets of papists. The weeping, mourning, but now joyful Methodists received me with inconceivable affection; a Christian surgeon dressed my wounds, and then I went into the preaching place, and joined in a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Him who stills the noise of the waves and the madness of the most malignant people."

Wesley's work in London was such as few men could stand. He regarded a Sunday's work in the city as equal to preaching eight sermons. One of his sacramental services lasted for five hours, and at a covenant service at Spitalfields twelve hundred Methodists met him and worshipped the same length of time.

Strange people encountered Wesley in his travels; at one place he met with a singular husband, "who, by the

advice of his pastor had, very calmly and deliberately, beaten his wife with a large stick, till she was black and blue, almost from head to foot." The man insisted that it was his duty to do this, because his wife was surly and ill-natured; and, that he was full of faith all the time he was doing it, and had been so ever since.

Passing through a mountainous portion of the country, Wesley met a set of people who were nearly equal to savages. He says: "A wilder people I never saw in England. The men, women and children filled the street as we rode along, and appeared just ready to devour us. They were, however, tolerably quiet while I preached; only a few pieces of dirt were thrown, and the bell-man came in the middle of the sermon. I had almost done when they began to ring the bells."

Wesley held his Conference for this year, 1757, at London. It was in session a week; and "from the first hour to the last," he says, "there was no jarring string, but all harmony and love." This is about what we know of this Conference, except that the Church question was discussed.

Some people regard Wesley as an arbitrary, imperious man, but this is a mistake. He strove only to follow the leadings of Providence, and often hesitated to use the loving authority of a spiritual father over his children.

In a letter to a friend he says, "In a thousand instances I feel the want of more resolution and firmness of spirit: I exercise as little authority as possible, because I am afraid of the people depending on me too much, and paying me more reverence than they ought."

Wesley came near losing his Kingswood school this year by fire. About 8 o'clock at night one of the boys opened the stairway, and was driven back by smoke. He shouted, "Fire! Murder! Fire!" All the family

were aroused, and were wild with fright. At length a man ran up a ladder, and with an axe broke through the roof, and the fire was soon put out. The next day a man met Wesley and told him the school-house was burned. Wesley says, "I felt not a moment's pain, knowing that God does all things well." Nothing seemed able to shake his faith in the goodness of God, and whether in adversity or prosperity, he leaned on His guiding hand.

One of the ablest books Wesley ever published was issued this year in reply to Dr. John Taylor of Norwich, the ablest Socinian writer of his day, on the doctrine of Original Sin. Wesley looked upon Taylor's system as nothing but "old deism in a new dress." In his view, Taylor's book was full of deadly poison, which had been diffusing itself through the nation, churches and universities for many years. Wesley treats his able opponent with great respect, but refutes his whole theory. Some time after the publication of this reply, he wrote to Dr. Taylor in reference to the controversy, and said he could not regard it as a dispute "between John Wesley and John Taylor," quoting Taylor's language, but as affecting the very vitals of true religion. "It is," said Wesley, "Christianity or heathenism. For take away the scriptural doctrine of redemption, or justification, and that of the new birth; or, which amounts to the same, explain them as you do, suitably to your doctrine of original sin; and what is Christianity better than heathenism? Wherein, except in rectifying some of our notions, has the religion of St. Paul any pre-eminence over that of Socrates or Epictetus? The point is, are those things that have been believed for many ages throughout the Christian world real, solid truths; or monkish, and vain imaginations?"

Thus Wesley held his adversary to the great and solemn facts in the history of mankind which attest the doctrine of original sin and the need of a Redeemer from sin. And our readers can see that now, not less than in Wesley's day, we must bring the same facts to the notice of men and press them upon their consciences. In no other way can we dissipate the dreams of those who would undermine and destroy the whole system of Christianity.

Dr. Taylor did not accept Wesley's challenge, and a few years after he died Wesley wrote of him to a friend : "For some years that great man, Dr. Taylor of Norwich, was an earnest Calvinist ; but afterwards finding he could not get far enough from that melancholy system, he ran, not only into Arianism, but into the very dregs of Socinianism. I have reason, however, to believe he was convinced of his mistake some years before he died ; but to acknowledge this publicly was too hard a task for him. "

In the year 1758 Wesley had the first intimation of the extension of Methodism into the New World. Under date of January 17, he writes : "I preached in Mr. Gilbert's house. Two negro servants of his and a mulatto appear to be much awakened. 'Shall not His saving health be made known to all nations ?'" In November following, he wrote : "I rode to Wandsworth, and baptized two negroes belonging to Mr. Gilbert, a gentleman lately come from Antigua. One of these is deeply convinced of sin ; the other rejoices in God her Saviour, and is the first African Christian I have known. But shall not our Lord, in due time, have these heathen also 'for His inheritance ?'"

We have here the germ of the great work of Methodism in the West India Islands, and among the millions of the black races throughout the world.

The man who planted Methodism in the West Indies deserves at least a brief notice at our hands. Nathaniel Gilbert possessed an estate in the Island of Antigua which descended to him from his ancestors. He was an able man, and held high office in the Island. His brother, a gay, wealthy, and worldly man, had been reduced to poverty, and took refuge first in Jamaica and then in England. His misfortunes brought him to repentance, and he became a Methodist. He sent to his brother Gilbert some of Wesley's writings, among them his "Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion." Believing Wesley to be an enthusiast, he refused to read his books, but his sister read the Appeal to him, and this so altered his opinion that he desired to see Wesley. With this purpose he visited England, where he remained two years. He made the acquaintance of Fletcher, and was so anxious for the salvation of the negroes of Antigua that he urged that holy man to go home with him; but Fletcher declined, saying he had not "sufficient zeal, grace, nor talents," for a missionary's life in the West Indies. Gilbert went home and became an evangelist himself. He fitted up a room, and at once began to preach to his own slaves, and was branded a madman for so doing. His brother Francis soon came from England to his help, a society was formed, and so Methodism started on its way in the West India Islands.

Nathaniel Gilbert died in 1774, eleven years before the regular Wesleyan missionaries came into the Islands, leaving, as the fruit of his labor, a society of sixty members. In his last sickness a friend said to him, "On whom do you trust?" "On Christ crucified," was the quick answer. "Have you peace with God?" "Un-speakable," he replied. "Have you no fear, no doubt?" "None," said the dying man. "Can you part with your

wife and children?" "Yes," said the departing saint; "God will be their strength and portion." Thus died the first Methodist preacher in the West Indies. The family of this good man walked in his steps, and as late as 1864, one of his great grandsons was the minister of Madeley parish, and stated "that he had reason to believe that no child or grandchild of the first West Indian Methodist had passed away without being prepared for the better world; and that almost all of them had been ever distinguished among Christians for their earnest devotion to the Divine Redeemer." "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth."

The work of Wesley both in England and Ireland was rich in incidents and abundant in toil. He never relaxed his efforts for a day. On Friday, after preaching a powerful sermon before the Bedford assizes, he declined the invitation of the presiding judge to dine with him, and rode a hundred and twenty miles, much of the way through a "storm of wind, snow, sleet and hail," to meet an appointment on Sunday at Epworth. In the afternoon, after attending service in his father's church, "he took his stand in the market-place, and in the midst of wintry winds and wintry rain, preached to an unflinching multitude, collected together from all the country round about."

He went into Ireland, where he passed through various scenes. At one place, "he found a room built purposely for him and his itinerants, three yards long, two and a quarter broad, and six feet high; the walls, floor, and ceiling, mud, and the furniture a clean chaff bed." At another place, Lurgan, he went to see a queer house "which an eminent scholar had built for himself;" it was "part mud, part brick, part stone, and part bones

and wood, with four windows, but without glass in any ; of two stories, but without a staircase ; on the floor three rooms—one three square, the second with five sides, and the third with more.” Wesley says, “I give a particular description of this wonderful edifice to illustrate the truth—there is no folly too great even for a man of sense, if he resolves to follow his own imagination.”

CHAPTER XV.

At one place Wesley preached in a church-yard ; at another he found the papists so bitter and bloodthirsty that "he left the place at four o'clock in the morning riding a horse without either bridle or saddle." At Limerick he found his noble helper, Thomas Walsh, "alive, and but just alive." He was dying of a consumption, brought on "by violent straining of his voice, added to frequent colds, which was now in its last stage, and beyond the reach of human help."

Soon after seeing his dying friend, Wesley preached in an island near Limerick "to thousands seated on the grass row by row." In preaching he over-strained himself, and the next morning began to spit blood ; for a week he had to rest, but repose, "a brimstone plaster, and a linctus of roasted lemon and honey," soon restored him to his usual health.

In August he returned to England to meet his Conference at Bristol. There were thirty-seven preachers present. Fourteen candidates offered for the regular itinerant work. The life and conduct of the preachers were examined into closely. They were enjoined to be more serious. "You must," said Wesley to them, "do one of three things : either spend time in chit-chat, or learn Latin or Hebrew, or spend all your time and strength in saving souls. Which will you do?" The answer of the preachers was, "The last, by the grace of God." Finding that Wesley's books had not been diligently circulated, the Conference agreed to allow one person in

every circuit a commission of ten per cent. on all the books he might sell. It was asked whether a certain preacher had said, "I want no more grace for a year and a day." The reply was, "Ask himself. If he has, and will not be convinced of his fault, let him be publicly disowned."

In the matter of discipline, the Conference was rigid. The assistants were directed to examine closely all the societies, and to remove from the private bands, and to put into penitential classes "all who were not exercising the faith by which a man is justified and finds peace with God."

There had been much misunderstanding and much wrong teaching on the doctrine of perfection, and the Conference gave the following expression on this vital subject :

The question was asked, "Do you affirm that perfection excludes all infirmities, ignorance, and mistake?"

Answer—"We continually affirm just the contrary."

Question—"What does Christian perfection imply?"

Answer—"The loving God with all the heart, so that every evil temper is destroyed, and every thought, and word, and work springs from, and is conducted to the end by the pure love of God and our neighbor."

The purity of his preachers and societies Wesley resolved to maintain.

"Are our societies," he asked, "in general as godly and as serious as the old Puritans? Why should they not? What means can we use to effect it?" The answer was, "Enforce family discipline, closely examine the state of every soul, not only at stated times, but in every conversation." In accordance with this view and purpose, Wesley wrote to one of his helpers: "No person must be allowed to preach or exhort among our peo-

ple whose life is not holy and unblamable ; nor any who asserts anything contrary to the gospel which we have received. And, if he does not own his fault and amend it, he cannot be a leader any longer." Strict but loving discipline was the means of maintaining the purity of the early Methodist societies. It might be well if Wesley's example in this respect were more closely copied by modern Methodists.

In his journeyings after the close of the Conference, Wesley called to see a man whose name is associated with the great revival that spread over England as one of the most devoted and successful laborers. John Berridge was vicar of Everton, but labored as an itinerant preacher for more than twenty years on a circuit which embraced five counties, and in which he usually preached from ten to twelve sermons a week. His congregations numbered in some places from ten to fifteen thousand. People came twenty miles to hear him, and were at Everton by seven o'clock in the morning, at which hour he preached. He was converted after he took charge of his parish, and the first year afterwards he saw a thousand persons under conviction of sin, and in the same time four thousand were awakened under his own and the preaching of Mr. Hicks, another devout minister of the Established Church.

He was bitterly opposed by the ungodly people of high and low degree, and the *old devil* was the name by which they called him. But he was not moved from his course. He rented barns and unoccupied dwellings, employed lay preachers and paid them himself, spending his full income, and even selling his family plate, to clothe and feed them. He was never married, and at his death a vast crowd of people gathered to pay the tribute of their tears to the holy man who had led them to Christ.

Under the preaching of Berridge the most extraordinary manifestations appeared. People were often stricken down and lay as if dead. On one occasion, under one of his sermons, several fainted, many cried out in agony of spirit, the church was packed from pulpit steps to the door, and the windows were filled; while he spoke some shrieked, others roared, but the most general sound was a loud breathing like that of people half strangled. Numbers fell down as dead; some sinking in silence, and some in the utmost agitation.

At one time in Everton church two hundred persons, mostly men, were at the same moment crying aloud for mercy.

In a letter to Wesley, Berridge describes some of the scenes at his meetings: "The word is everywhere like a hammer, breaking the rock in pieces. People fall down, cry out most bitterly, and struggle so vehemently that five or six men can scarce hold them.

"Of late there has been a wonderful outpouring of the spirit of love among believers; insomuch that they have fainted under it, fallen down, and lain upon the ground, as dead, for some hours; their bodies being so weakened by these transports of joy that they have not been able to endure hard labor for days afterwards."

Such manifestations had occurred years before at different places, and Wesley, after describing what he had seen at Everton, says:

"I have generally observed more or less of these outward symptoms to attend the beginning of a general work of God; so it was in New England, Scotland, Holland, Ireland, and many parts of England, but, after a time, they gradually decrease, and the work goes on more quietly and silently. Those whom it pleases God to employ in his work ought to be quite passive in this

respect; they should choose nothing, but leave entirely to him all the circumstances of his own work." Afterwards, in the spread of Methodism in America, there was abundant confirmation of Wesley's opinion.

In the great revival in England, the conversion of ministers of the Established Church is a striking feature. We have seen what a work Berridge carried on after his conversion. Another remarkable case was that of Rev. Richard Conyers.

He was vicar of Helmsley, and labored in every way to promote the morals of his people. He instructed the young, catechised the children, held prayer-meetings at his own house, and yet he was not happy in his own religious experience. He fasted often, and actually at the altar of his own church signed solemn covenants with his own blood. But still he was unhappy. At last, by reading the Bible carefully, he was led to see the way of salvation by simple faith in Christ. On Christmas day he trusted and found peace. "I went up stairs and down again," he says, "backwards and forwards in my room, clapping my hands for joy and crying, 'I have found Him, I have found Him whom my soul loveth,' and for a little time, whether in the body or out of it, I could hardly tell." He told his own experience in his church, and at once began to preach salvation by faith.

Wesley, being in Bristol, heard of the wretched condition of the French prisoners, and he went to see them. He found eleven hundred of them in the most wretched state, lying on beds of straw, covered with rags, and in danger of dying. He went back to Bristol, and that night preached on the text, "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." He collected about a hundred dollars, and bought clothing

for the poor prisoners. He also wrote a letter for the press in which he touchingly described the condition of the French soldiers. By his efforts they were relieved by contributions sent from various parts of the Kingdom. He literally went about doing good. No man could fall so low as to be beneath his sympathy and help.

There arose about this time much controversy among the Methodists concerning the doctrine of Christian perfection, and Wesley took great pains to guard his people against all extravagance and all unscriptural views on this state of grace.

“He lays it down that no one ought to believe that he is fully sanctified till he has the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification, as clearly as his justification; and that all ought to wait for this great change, ‘not in careless indifference, or indolent inactivity; but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God.’” And he adds, “If any man dream of attaining it any other way, yea, or of keeping it when it is attained, he deceiveth his own soul. It is true, we receive it by simple faith, but God does not, will not give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence, in the way which he hath ordained.”

If ever there was a true philanthropist, John Wesley was one. On the first of the year 1760, a friend whom he did not know sent him \$100, and desired him to lay it out for the benefit of poor prisoners. He went to two of the London prisons and spent the whole sum in giving bread and clothes to nearly naked and starving men and

women. Speaking of this gift, he says: "The whole of this sum was laid out in real charity. And how much more noble a satisfaction must result from this, to the generous benefactor, than he could have received from an embroidered suit of clothes, or a piece of plate made in the newest fashion. Men of reason, judge!"

A proposal was this year (1760) made to Wesley by Rev. Walter Sellon, one of his earnest co-laborers, to establish "an hospital for poor superannuated Methodist preachers, and for travelling preachers' wives; together with a college for a master and four fellows and a certain number of students, to be chosen from Kingswood and elsewhere." Wesley answered Sellon's letter, but his reply has not been found.

During this year, and for several succeeding, there was a great revival of the work of holiness among the Methodists. "God was pleased," says Wesley, "to pour out his Spirit on every part of England and Ireland, perhaps in a manner we had never seen; certainly not for twenty years." In 1762 he found "four hundred witnesses of sanctification in the London Societies, and the classes were everywhere quickened with the same aspirations after holiness." The experience of those who were sanctified is thus described: "After a deep conviction of inbred sin, they had been so filled with faith and love that sin vanished, and they found from that time no pride, anger, or unbelief. They could rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks. Now, whether we call this the destruction or the suspension of sin, it is a glorious work of God; such work as, considering both the depth and extent of it, we never saw in these kingdoms before." Some, Wesley admits, had lost this blessing, but very few, com-

pared with the large number of professors. Some ran into a wild enthusiasm, and to some extent became stumbling blocks, but the work went on, "nor has it ceased," he says, "to this day in any of its branches. God still convinces, justifies, sanctifies. We have lost only the dross, the enthusiasm, the offence. The pure gold remains, faith working by love, and we have reason to believe increases daily." Wesley attributed the marvellous success of the Methodists to the preaching of holiness. He noticed and stated the fact that wherever it was preached revivals followed. "Holiness," said he, "is the grand depositum which God has given to the people called Methodists, and chiefly to propagate this, it appears, God raised them up. Their mission was not to form a religious party, but to spread holiness over these lands."

While the Methodists were striving to lead the ignorant masses of the people to Christ, and to spread holiness through the land, they were assailed by every means at the command of the wicked and profane. The comedian Foote ridiculed and caricatured them on the stage; in penny pamphlets they were abused to the verge of indecency and profanity by weak but scurrilous writers. The public were told that Whitefield's "hummers, sighers, and weepers were hireling hypocrites at two shillings and sixpence per week, and were the approbatives to his doctrine." One writer describes the Methodists as "a restless, turbulent people, remarkable for nothing but their abusive language and uncharitable sentiments." Methodism, to this writer, is "a spurious mixture of enthusiasm and blasphemy, popery and quakerism," and its preaching "gross, personal abuse; vague, incoherent reasoning, and loose, empty declama-

tion." A class-leader was spoken of as "an illiterate hog, a feeder of swine;" and the writer of this abuse said he could not doubt that he should live to see "this imaginary candle of the Lord which the Methodists had set up dwindle into a snuff and expire in a stink." Happily he did not prove to be a prophet.

While the wicked world was shooting its poisoned arrows, Wesley went on with his work of preaching holiness and urging his people to keep close to the spirit of the gospel. In his printed sermons as in his oral, he did not spare. Of paying taxes he said: "It is, at least, as sinful to defraud the King of his right as to rob our fellow subjects; the King has full as much right to his customs as we have to our houses and apparel."

On dram drinking and dram selling he is terrible. "Drams, or spirituous liquors, are liquid fire, and all who manufacture or sell them, except as medicine, are poisoners general. They murder his majesty's subjects by wholesale. They drive them to hell like sheep. The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves. Blood, blood is there; the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof of their dwellings, are stained with blood."

In his "Advice to the Methodists with Regard to Dress," he is plain and to the point. "I would not advise you to imitate the Quakers in these little particulars of dress, which can answer no possible end, but to distinguish them from all other people. To be singular, merely for singularity's sake, is not the part of a Christian. But I advise you to imitate them, first, in the neatness, and secondly, in the plainness, of their apparel. Wear no gold, no pearls or precious stones; use no curling of hair; buy no velvets, no silks, no fine linen, no

superfluities, no *mere ornaments*, though ever so much in fashion. Wear nothing which is of a glaring colour, or which is, in any kind, gay, glistening, showy, nothing made in the very height of fashion, nothing apt to attract the eyes of by-standers.

“I do not advise women to wear rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace, or ruffles. Neither do I advise men to wear coloured waistcoats, shining stockings, glittering or costly buckles or buttons, either on their coats or in their sleeves, any more than gay, fashionable, or expensive perukes. It is true these are little, very little things; therefore, they are not worth defending; therefore, give them up, let them drop, throw them away, without another word.”

What say fashionable, gay and dressy Methodists to this?

Wesley had now worked for a quarter of a century. With what results? Methodism had been planted in almost every county in England. Ninety itinerant preachers were in the field, aided in their work by a large number of local preachers, leaders, and stewards. The two Wesleys had published a large number of books, tracts, and hymns. John himself had issued from the press nine numbers of his Journal, and seventy volumes of books, including his Notes on the New Testament, his Sermons, and his Christian Library. Can the records of the world show a nobler result than this? Well does Mr. Tyerman, his latest biographer, say in his review of these twenty-five years: “Wesley began his career as a penniless priest; he was without patrons and without friends; magistrates threatened him; the clergy expelled him from their churches, and wrote numberless and furious pasquinades against him; newspapers and

magazines reviled him; ballad singers, in foulest language, derided him; mobs assaulted, and, more than once, well-nigh murdered him; not a few of his companions in toil forsook him and became his antagonists; and yet, despite all this, such were some of the results of the first five-and-twenty years of his unequalled public ministry."

CHAPTER XVI.

WE have laid before the reader the advice of Wesley in reference to extravagance in dress and living. His earnest protest cannot be appreciated unless we have some idea of the excesses which prevailed in English society in his times.

The Sabbath was a day for visits among the nobility and gentry, and for the coarser and more brutal sports among the lower classes. The great political ministers gave their grand entertainments on the Lord's day. Gambling was a fashionable vice. Men were "learned in obscenities and skilled in wickedness." "The mansions, furniture, tables, equipages, gardens, clothes, plate, and jewels of the nobility were as gorgeous as wealth could make them. Young tradesmen had their country houses, drove their carriages, and, to a ruinous extent, left the management of their business to their servants. Dress was ludicrously expensive. The upper classes indulged in their brocades, laces, velvets, satins, and silver tassels; and even the sons of mechanics sported their gold buttons, high quartered shoes, scarlet waistcoats, and doeskin breeches. But, perhaps, the most absurd of all was the ladies' powdered head-dress; curled, frizzled, and stuffed with wool; and pinned, greased, and worked up into an immense protuberance, which, for months, put it out of the lady's power to comb her head, and created an effluvia of not the most pleasant odour, and gave birth to animalcula which ladies could have done well enough without."

This may help us to appreciate the caution in the old editions of the Discipline to Methodist ladies against carrying high heads and wearing enormous bonnets.

The picture just given refers mainly to the society in London and other great cities of the Kingdom. In the rural districts the state of society was not much better. "The country," says Tyerman, "if not so flagrantly wicked as the town, was, notwithstanding, steeped in ignorance and sin. There were thousands of godly people, but the bulk of the population were little better than baptized barbarians. The clergy, in many instances, were lazy, or drunken, or non-resident. Numbers of them were miserably paid, and had to practice meanesses to eke out insufficient incomes. Others were more fond of preaching over pewter pots, in dirty ale-houses, than of preaching in their pulpits, or of visiting their flocks. Others revelled amid all the luxuries of a fat benefice, leaving the duties of their parishes to young, half-starved curates, who had to live on the mere gleanings of their master's vintage; and others had a far greater penchant for persecuting Methodists than for saving souls."

So far from this picture of English clergymen and English society being extravagant, the author of it declares it to be "simply defective—that is all."

Many questions came up in the progress of Methodism to perplex Wesley, and the proper settlement of which required cool and careful judgment. One of these was, whether women should be allowed to preach? Wesley had shocked the nerves of his brother ministers in the Established Church by permitting unordained *men* to preach; now he was to become more vile in their eyes by granting this high privilege to women. Sarah Cosby was the first female preacher among the Methodists.

She was a most successful class leader, and on one occasion when she expected to meet her class of about thirty, she found a congregation of nearly two hundred.

Of the meeting and what occurred she says: "I found an awful, loving sense of the Lord's presence. I was not sure whether it was right for me to exhort in so public a manner; and, yet, I saw it impracticable to meet all these people by way of speaking particularly to each individual. I therefore gave out a hymn, and prayed, and told them part of what the Lord had done for myself, persuading them to flee from sin."

A few days after, she spoke to another large congregation, and says: "My soul was much comforted in speaking to the people, as my Lord has removed all my scruples respecting the propriety of my acting thus publicly."

In reply to a letter from this lady to Wesley he wrote: "Hitherto, I think you have not gone too far; you could not well do less. I apprehend all you can do more is, when you meet again, to tell them simply, 'You lay me under a great difficulty. The Methodists do not allow of women preachers; neither do I take upon me any such character; but I will just nakedly tell you what is in my heart.' I do not see that you have broken any law. Go on calmly and steadily. If you have time, you may read to them the Notes on any chapter before you speak a few words; or one of the most awakening sermons, as other women have done long ago."

Sarah Cosby remained a preacher more than forty years, and died in 1804. Among other women who preached among the Methodists we may name Hannah Harrison, Miss Bosanquet, afterwards the wife of Fletcher, Miss Horrall, Miss Newman, and Mary Barrett.

In April, 1761, Wesley went to Scotland. Methodism

had been already planted in Aberdeen by some who had heard him preach in England. Wesley remained a week with the little band, and preached twice every day at five in the morning and at seven in the evening. Some unfriendly person published an account of this visit, in which are many assertions that the reader can only be amused at. "All Wesley's discourses," he says, "abounded with comical stories, which generally concluded with something to his own praise." The following is simply ridiculous: "Before his separation, he caused a paper to be written, containing words to this purpose—'On such a day, at such a sermon, we, the following subscribers, were converted from the evil of our ways to the true faith of Jesus Christ.' Many persons ignorantly put their names to this paper without knowing what they signed. This document Mr. Wesley carried with him to show the great success of his ministry in Aberdeen."

We give this idle story only to show what absurdities were published about Wesley and his work even in the most respectable journals of that day.

This wise writer also informs his readers how the Methodists conducted their love-feasts: "In the morning of the day on which the full moon happens, all the men meet in one place; in the afternoon, the women meet by themselves; and at night both men and women meet together. Their employment, then, is to eat bread and drink water with one another, to spend the whole night in prayer and singing hymns, and then to part with a brotherly kiss."

Among the older Methodists there lingered until a few years ago some who had seen the great leader, and whose recollections of him and his manner of travelling are always interesting. Tyerman says that "an old Methodist at Yarm, England, related that she well remem-

bered Wesley,—his cassock, his black silk stockings, his large silver buckles, and his old lumbering carriage, with a book-case inside of it.. In fact, she herself and another little girl, while playing, ran the pole of the carriage through Mr. Merryweather's parlor window, for which they deservedly received a scolding. She further stated that, on a certain occasion when Mr. Merryweather's servant entered Wesley's room, she found Wesley's coachman rolling himself up and down the feather-bed most vigorously, because, as he affirmed, Wesley would not sleep in it until it was made as hard as possible."

Wesley in his travels came to Rotherham, where a new chapel had been built in an octagon form. The style pleased him very much, and he says, "Pity our houses, where the ground will admit of it, should be built in any other form." While preaching the opening sermon in this house, "the rabble drove in an ass, which stood in the aisle, lifted up its eyes to the preacher, remained quiet until the sermon was ended, then turned round and leisurely walked away, without making the disturbance that the mob expected. Wesley pronounced the ass the most attentive hearer that he had."

At the Conference of 1761 the doctrine of Christian perfection was carefully reviewed. Some crude and extravagant views of holiness had been announced by certain persons, and Wesley felt constrained to give a clear statement of the doctrine as he held and taught it. He preached a course of sermons on the subject, in which he said, "As long as the soul is connected with the body, it cannot think but by help of bodily organs. As long as these organs are imperfect, we shall be liable to *mistakes*, both speculative and *practical*. For all these we need the atoning blood, as indeed for every defect or omission.

Therefore, all men have need to say, daily, ‘*Forgive us our trespasses.*’”

In his sermon on Wandering Thoughts he says: “That every man, either in sleep or from some other cause, is more or less innocently delirious every four and twenty hours, and that the only ‘wandering thoughts’ which are sinful, and from which we should pray to be delivered, are all those thoughts which wander from God, and leave him no room in the mind; all which spring from sinful tempers; all which produce or feed sinful tempers.” In summing up he says: “To expect deliverance from wandering thoughts, occasioned by evil spirits, is to expect that the devil should die or fall asleep. To expect deliverance from those which are occasioned by other men is to expect, either that men should cease from the earth, or that we should be absolutely secluded from them. And to pray for deliverance from those which are occasioned by the body is, in effect, to pray that we may leave the body.” This sermon was designed to correct the errors of some who held to what they called the sanctification of the *mind*.

Wesley observed closely the progress of the work of holiness among his people, and gives this record: “We had a love-feast in London, at which several declared the blessings they had found. We need not be careful by what name to call them, while the theory is beyond dispute. Many have, and many do daily, experience an unspeakable change. After being deeply convicted of inbred sin, particularly of pride, self-will, and unbelief, in a moment they feel all faith and love; no pride, no self-will, or anger; and from that moment they have continual fellowship with God, always rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks. Whoever ascribes such a change to the devil, I ascribe it to the Spirit of God.”

Most persons consider "a soup house" a modern institution. It is not. Wesley established one at the Foundry, in London, more than a hundred years ago. The winter of 1763 was unusually severe. The Thames was frozen so hard that vehicles crossed on the ice, and fairs were held on the river. Thousands of boatmen and others were thrown out of employment and reduced to great suffering. Many persons were frozen to death, and the streets of London were filled with famished multitudes begging food. Wesley could not see such misery without trying to relieve it. He opened a place at the Foundry at which "great numbers of poor people had peas, pottage, and barley broth given them at the expense of Mr. Wesley, and a collection was made in the Foundry for further supplying the necessities of the destitute, at which upwards of \$500 were contributed." This was liberal, considering the value of money at that time, for the poor Methodists.

Wesley not only worked to relieve misery—he was as laborious in his efforts to suppress vice. The Society for the Reformation of Manners was established in 1677, but had long been defunct. In 1757, through the influence of Wesley and the Methodists, it was revived. The parish officers were reminded of their duty, and the laws against immorality more rigidly enforced. The work was so effectually done that "in five years ten thousand persons were brought to justice, chiefly for gambling, swearing, Sabbath breaking, lewdness, and selling obscene engravings." In 1763 one-half of the members of this Society were Methodists.

At the Conference of 1763, Howell Harris, the Welsh preacher, was present, and in his speeches exhorted the preachers to be faithful in their work, and to speak to every man they met about his soul. He said: "If I

meet a poor man, I give him a half-penny, if I have one ; but I always remember that the man has a soul as well as a body, and therefore I say something to him respecting his salvation. And if I meet a rich man, why should I be afraid of him? For aught I know, he may be worse than the beast he rides upon. Perhaps the beast carries the devil on its back." After Conference, Wesley made a visit to Wales, and enjoyed the Christian hospitality of Harris. He says: "Howell Harris's house is one of the most elegant places which I have seen in Wales. The little chapel, and all things round about it, are finished in an uncommon taste; and the gardens, orchards, fish-ponds, and mount adjoining, make the place a little paradise. He thanks God for these things, and looks through them. About six-score persons are now in the family; all diligent, all constantly employed, all fearing God and working righteousness." Harris, it seems, was the head of an establishment of devout persons in which religion and labor were happily combined.

We regard John Wesley as one of the wisest Christian leaders that ever lived, and his opinions as to the best method of building up believers in their holy faith are well worth the most careful study. On his journey through Wales he said: "I was more convinced than ever that the preaching like an apostle, without bringing together those who are awakened and training them up in the ways of God, is only begetting children for the murderer. How much preaching has there been for these twenty years all over Pembrokeshire! But no regular societies, no discipline, no order or connection; and the consequence is, that nine in ten of the once awakened are faster asleep than ever." These words are well worth serious thought. Methodism without discipline, and without the religious training which its mem-

bers secure in the class, prayer, and other social meetings, can never fully do its work in the world.

The care with which Wesley watched over his members is really noteworthy. He came to Bristol, where he found, as he also did in London and other places, that many Methodists were growing rich. He said of such: "This will be their grand danger; as they are industrious and frugal, they must needs increase in goods. Some who are in business have increased in substance seven fold, some of them twenty, yea, an hundred fold. What need, then, have these of the strongest warnings, lest they be entangled therein and perish?" Is there not need of like warning now?

He came to London and says: "I found our house in ruins, great part of it being taken down in order to a thorough repair. But as much remained as I wanted; six feet square suffices me by day and by night."

CHAPTER XVII.

WE are now near the period when Methodism opened one of its grandest fields.

Whitefield had visited America and preached with wonderful power over the sea coast line from Boston to Savannah. In the year 1764 he was again in the New World, and wrote to his old friend Wesley of his labors and the eager desire of the people to hear the Word. "I have been mercifully preserved from the summer's heat; and had strength permitted, I might have preached to thousands and thousands thrice a day. Zealous preachers are not so rare in this New World as in other parts. Here is room for a hundred itinerants. Fain would I end my life in rambling after those who have rambled away from Jesus Christ. I am persuaded you are like minded. I do not repent being a poor despised, cast-out, and now almost worn-out itinerant. I would do it again, if I had my choice."

Methodism, when it came to America, did not find a people wholly unprepared for its teachings. The "Great Awakening," as it is called, which began in the Northern States under the preaching of such faithful men as the Tennents, Rowland, Jonathan Edwards, and others, turned the thoughts of many thousands to the question of salvation. Whitefield came over in the height of this revival, and entered into it with all his soul. Wherever he appeared multitudes crowded to hear him. He would travel two hundred miles a week, and preach sixteen times. Under the preaching of some of the ministers

who labored in this great work, there were physical effects like those we have noticed as occurring in England. Many persons would fall fainting, and be carried from the churches in an insensible state.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, were converted under the preaching of Whitefield, but for want of proper pastoral care most of them went back again to the world. In 1760, it is supposed, a small party of emigrants came from Ireland, and settled in the city of New York. Among them was Philip Embury. They found no congenial religious associations, and soon fell into a back-slidden state. In 1766 another company came over; one of them, Barbara Heck, a godly woman, and a cousin of Embury, was shocked to find that no religious services were held by the Methodists. One day she found a number of them playing at cards. She snatched up the cards, threw them into the fire, and gave the offenders a sound exhortation. She then went off in search of Embury, found him, and told him he must begin to preach. He declined; she insisted. He said he had no house to preach in. Preach in your own house, said the zealous woman. He had no congregation. She would collect one. He at last consented. Barbara went out and brought in four persons, who, with herself, made up the first Methodist congregation in America. The news of the meeting spread, and after a few weeks the people that attended more than filled the house. In a few months they had formed two classes. Three British soldiers joined them and became exhorters. After a while Embury was invited to preach at the alms-house, and soon after they fitted up a preaching place in a rigging loft. A strange helper now appeared. An officer of the King's army, with his sword on and one eye tied up, came into the loft. They thought he had come to



Old Rigging Loft, William Street, New York.

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persecute them. They watched him. He seemed devout; knelt with them in prayer, knew the hymns, and sung them heartily. When the services were over, he came forward and called them brethren. It was Captain Thomas Webb, of the Royal Army, a spiritual son of John Wesley, and a soldier of the Cross. He was a preacher of great fervor and power. Hundreds of people wept, trembled, and fell in conviction under his sermons. He planted Methodism in Philadelphia, and there, as in New York, the first place of worship was a sail-loft.

Robert Strawbridge came over in 1764 or '65, and settled in what was then "the backwoods," in Frederick county, Md. He was a poor, hard working man, but pious and faithful. He, like Embury, preached first in his own house, but soon built a little log meeting-house on Sam's creek. It was only twenty-two feet square, and had neither window, door nor floor. But it was honored of God. It was the birthplace of many souls, and gave five preachers to the Church.

In 1769 the little band of American Methodists was reinforced by the arrival of three more laborers, Robert Williams, a local preacher from Ireland, and Joseph Pillmore and Richard Boardman, sent out by Wesley as missionaries. They immediately entered into the fields already white unto the harvest, and the people flocked to hear them in multitudes.

The Methodists in New York built their first church in John street, and on this spot a Methodist church still stands. The house was 60 feet long and 42 feet wide, and was named Wesley chapel, after the founder of Methodism. It was erected in 1768, and was dedicated in October of the same year by Mr. Embury. When Boardman came to New York, he found the Society in a flourish-

ing condition. He entered upon his work with great spirit, and his congregations were large and attentive.

Mr. Pillmore, after spending some time in Philadelphia, came into Maryland and preached with success to the congregations which had been collected by Strawbridge. Robert Williams also came to their help, and "a great work began in Baltimore county and other parts of the State." In this revival William Watters was converted, and became the first native itinerant American Methodist preacher. Williams made a "successful missionary tour" in the peninsula of the Eastern Shore, and, crossing the Bay, he came to Norfolk early in 1772. Here he preached as a stranger from the court-house steps to a wondering multitude. He preached in Portsmouth, and formed there the first Society of Methodists organized south of the Potomac. The year after he visited Petersburg, and after preaching there a short time he formed a circuit reaching from that town nearly to the State of North Carolina. It was called Brunswick, and yet remains in the Minutes of the Virginia Conference the oldest circuit in the Southern Methodist Church.

The way of Williams had been opened in all this region by the labors of Archibald McRoberts and Devereux Jarratt. The former lived in Chesterfield, the latter in Dinwiddie county; both were zealous and faithful clergymen of the Established Church, and preached as itinerants with much success. Jarratt went out of the churches and preached the Word wherever he could find hearers; he went "by day and by night, and at any time in the week, to private houses and convened the people for prayer, singing, preaching, and conversation." He made visits to twenty-nine counties in Virginia and North Carolina, and all the while kept up his Sunday services in his own parish. McRoberts was a true helper

in this work, but he differed in doctrine from the Church clergy, left the Establishment and joined the Presbyterians. He removed to Prince Edward county, Va., and was greatly useful in his new Church relations.

As soon as Wesley received the reports of the missionaries already in America he determined to send them help. In 1771 Francis Asbury and Richard Wright volunteered for the New World and were sent by the English Conference.

Asbury became the Wesley of America, and his name is worthy to be enrolled among the greatest soldiers of Christ. He has left a brief account of his experience in coming to America. Speaking of the Conference at which he volunteered for the work, he says: "Before this I had felt for half a year strong intimations in my mind that I should visit America, which I laid before the Lord, being unwilling to do my own will, or to run before I was sent. During this time my trials were very great, which the Lord, I believe, permitted to prove and try me, in order to prepare me for future usefulness. At the Conference it was proposed that some preachers should go over to the American continent. I spoke my mind, and made an offer of myself. It was accepted by Mr. Wesley and others, who judged I had a call. From Bristol I went home to acquaint my parents with my great undertaking, which I opened in as gentle a manner as possible. Though it was grievous to flesh and blood, they consented to let me go. My mother is one of the tenderest parents in the world; but I believe she was blessed in the present instance with divine assistance to part with me. I visited most of my friends in Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire, and felt much life and power among them. Several of our meetings were, indeed, held in the Spirit and life of God. Many

of my friends were struck with wonder when they heard of my going; but none opened their mouths against it, hoping it was of God. Some wished that their situation would allow them to go with me.

"I returned to Bristol in the latter end of August, where Richard Wright was waiting for me, to sail in a few days for Philadelphia. When I came to Bristol I had not one penny of money; but the Lord soon opened the hearts of friends, who supplied me with clothes and ten pounds. Thus I found by experience that the Lord will provide for those who trust in him.

"On Wednesday, September 2, we set sail from a port near Bristol; and having a good wind, soon passed the channel. For three days I was very ill with the seasickness; and no sickness I ever knew was equal to it. The captain behaved well to us. On the Lord's day, September 8, Brother W. preached a sermon on deck, and all the crew gave attention.

"Thursday, 12th. I will set down a few things that lie on my mind. Whither am I going? To the New World. What to do? To gain honor? No, if I know my own heart. To get money? No, I am going to live to God, and to bring others so to do. In America there has been a work of God: some moving first among the Friends, but in time it declined; likewise by the Presbyterians, but among them also it declined. The people God owns in England are the Methodists. The doctrines they preach and the discipline they enforce are, I believe, the purest of any people now in the world. The Lord has greatly blessed these doctrines and this discipline in the three kingdoms; they must therefore be pleasing to him. If God does not acknowledge me in America, I will soon return to England. I know my views are upright now—may they never be otherwise!"

In October they landed at Philadelphia. Asbury says : "When I came near the American shore, my very heart melted within me ; to think whence I came, where I was going, and what I was going about. But I felt my mind open to the people, and my tongue loosed to speak. I felt that God is here, and find plenty of all I need." Asbury said he found about three hundred members in New York, two hundred and fifty in Philadelphia, and a few in New Jersey. He says nothing of those in Maryland and Virginia. In the whole country there were probably five hundred Methodists.

As an itinerant, Asbury entered upon his work in the true spirit of the gospel. Before he came the preachers had spent nearly their whole labor on the cities. He says : "My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I shall show them the way. I am come over with an upright intention, and through the grace of God I will make it appear ; and I am determined that no man shall bias me with soft words and fair speeches. Whomsoever I please or displease, I will be faithful to God, to the people, and to my own soul. From the date of this resolution to his death—forty-five years afterwards—he adhered to his purpose with unsurpassed firmness and fidelity. The example of Asbury must have stimulated his brethren, for the next year Mr. Pillmore went through Virginia, and as far southward as Savannah, Ga., while Mr. Boardman went north as far as Boston.

No regular Conference of the American preachers was held until 1773 ; but in the meantime they considered matters of special importance at their quarterly meetings. Let us look at one of the little gatherings, and see the beginning of our now complicated and imposing Conferences. At one of these meetings, on the western

shore of Maryland, Mr. Asbury preached on the duties of the ministry, and then the preachers took up "their temporal business."

"1. What are our collections? We found them sufficient to defray our expenses.

"2. How are the preachers stationed?

"3. Shall we be strict in our society meetings, and not admit strangers? Agreed.

"4. Shall we drop preaching in the day time through the week? Not agreed to.

5. "Will the people be content without our administering the sacraments? John King was neuter; brother Strawbridge pleaded much for the ordinances, and so did the people, who seemed to be much biassed by him. I told them I would not agree to it at that time, and insisted on our abiding by our rules.

"6. Shall we make collections weekly to pay the preachers, board and expenses? This was not agreed to. We then inquired into the moral character of the preachers and exhorters."

Such is Asbury's account of one of the primitive quarterly meetings.

The first Annual Conference was held at Philadelphia July 14, 1773. There were six or seven preachers present. The whole number of members was 1160. In New York 180, in Philadelphia 180, in New Jersey 200, in Maryland 500, and in Virginia 100. Six circuits were formed and ten preachers stationed.

The year following was one of great success. On the Eastern Shore of Maryland there was a gracious revival. A Society was formed not far from New York city, in Baltimore there was a large increase, and a new church was built at Fell's Point, which was the first erected in the city. Asbury was the stationed preacher, but he did

not confine himself to the city. He went out into the country preaching nearly every day, and rejoiced to see the work of God spreading with power among the people. Early in 1774 the Baltimore Methodists laid the foundation of another church, Light Street, which became famous as one of the most powerful centres of Methodism in the country.

At the second Conference, held in Philadelphia in May, 1774, the number of members was 2,073, showing an increase of over 900. Seven preachers were received on trial, most of whom were fruits of the revivals which blessed the infant Church. At this Conference the practice of examining the character of the preachers was established under the question, "Are there any objections to any of the preachers?" It is stated that "they were examined one by one." The work of revival was very powerful in various sections of the country, and the reports greatly encouraged the laborers. Robert Williams gave a cheering report from his field. "I met Brother Williams, from Virginia," says Asbury, "who gave me a great account of the work of God in those parts; five or six hundred souls justified by faith, and five or six circuits formed, so that we now have fourteen circuits in America, and about twenty-two preachers are required to supply them." Asbury speaks of Williams as "a singular man, but honest in his intentions, and sincerely engaged for the prosperity of the work."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT THE third Conference held at Philadelphia in May, 1775, the numbers in society were 3,148. The increase was over one thousand. The country was on the eve of the Revolutionary war, and as most of the preachers were Englishmen, their sympathies were naturally on the side of the mother country. This hindered their usefulness to some extent. The Conference appointed "a general fast for the prosperity of the work, and for the peace of America."

Asbury was appointed to labor in Norfolk, Va.; he came to his work and found about "thirty persons in society, but they had no class-meetings," and no preaching place but "an old shattered building which had been a play-house." Asbury at once set to work to build a church, but the work went on slowly. Hearing of a great revival in Brunswick under the preaching of Rev. George Shadford, he went to his help. The work in all that region of country was fearful in power. Great crowds flocked to hear the Methodist preachers, and under preaching hundreds would be seized with trembling and fall helpless to the ground. Eighteen hundred members were added to the Church as the fruits of this revival. The work spread through fourteen counties in Virginia and into several in North Carolina. In the counties bordering on Maryland there was a gracious outpouring of the Spirit. In the class-meetings it was no uncommon sight to see the seats crowded with penitents. Mr. Jarratt says: "Sometimes twelve or fifteen find the Lord at one class-meeting. I am just returned

from meeting two classes. Much of the power of God was in each." Mr. Rankin, who came to aid in the revival, says of one of his sermons and the effect produced: "I had gone through about two-thirds of my discourse, and was bringing the words home to the present *now*, when such power descended that hundreds fell to the ground, and the house seemed to shake with the presence of God. The chapel was full of white and black, and many were without that could not get in. Look where we would, we saw nothing but streaming eyes and faces bathed in tears, and heard nothing but groans and strong cries after God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Husbands were inviting their wives to go to heaven, wives their husbands, parents their children, and children their parents, brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers. This mighty effusion of the Spirit continued for above an hour." Again he says: "What a work is God working in this corner of Mr. Jarratt's parish! It seemed as if all the country for ten miles around were ready to turn to God."

He went into North Carolina, where the same scenes were repeated, and thousands wept and turned from their sins to the living God.

The Conference for 1776 was held at Baltimore, Md. The increase from the revivals was one thousand and eight hundred. There were eleven Circuits, and twenty-five preachers were sent to supply them. The war was now raging, and the whole country filled with alarm. Into many places the preachers could not go, and the work languished, and many fell away to the world. But still, at the little Conference held at Deer Creek, in Maryland, in 1777, the reported increase was above two thousand members and twelve preachers. The entire membership was nearly seven thousand, with thirty-six

preachers. Mr. Rankin and Mr. Shadford now left the country and returned to England; but Asbury would not consent to go with them. "I had resolved," he says "not to depart from the work on any consideration." When his brethren had sailed for England, he says: "So we are left alone. But I leave myself in the hands of God, relying on his good providence to direct and protect us, persuaded that nothing will befall us but what shall conduce to his glory and my benefit."

In 1778 the Conference was held at Leesburg, Va. The ravages of war told on the infant Church. The decrease was eight hundred and seventy-three members and five preachers. Asbury took refuge from the storm of war in the State of Delaware, where he remained for nearly a year, calmly watching for the doors to be again opened. But he was not idle. Though he could not preach on the Sabbath, he would go out at night, and from house to house speak words of warning and comfort to the few people that gathered to hear him. He says it was "a season of the most active, most useful, and suffering part of his life."

Some of the preachers who ventured out on their Circuits were the victims of severe persecution. Freeborn Garrettson, preaching in Maryland, was beaten nearly to death by a brutal man while on his way to an appointment. He was thrown from his horse with great violence, and lay on the ground insensible. A kind lady, passing by, had him removed to a house, where he was bled and restored to his senses. His persecutor, thinking he would die, showed signs of penitence; but when he saw that the preacher was likely to recover, he went for a magistrate, and the two came and "appeared as if actuated by the devil." Mr. Garrettson says:

"With a stern look the magistrate demanded my

name. I told him; and he took out his pen and ink and began to write a mittimus to commit me to jail. 'Pray, sir,' said I, 'are you a justice of the peace?' He replied that he was. 'Why, then,' said I, 'do you suffer men to behave in this manner? If such persons are not taken notice of, a stranger can with no degree of safety travel the road.' 'You have,' said he, 'broken the law.' 'How do you know that?' answered I; 'but suppose I have, is this the way to put the law in force against me? I am an inhabitant of this State, and have property in it; and, if I mistake not, the law says, for the first offence the fine is five pounds, and double for every offence after. The grand crime was preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which I greatly rejoice. My enemy,' said I, 'conducted himself more like a highwayman than a person enforcing the law in a Christian country. Be well assured, this matter will be brought to light,' said I, 'in awful eternity.' He dropped his pen, and made no farther attempt to send me to prison. By this time, the woman who bled me came with a carriage, and I found myself able to rise from my bed and give an exhortation to the magistrate, my persecutor, and others who were present."

Joseph Hartley, another preacher, was seized in Talbot county and confined in jail; but this did not stop him from preaching. The people collected about the prison, he preached to them through the bars of the window, many were cut to the heart and began to seek the Lord. Some of the people said they had better let him go, for if they kept him in jail, he would convert the whole town.

In Queen Anne's county he was forbidden to preach, but he would go to his appointments, and after singing and praying, from his knees would exhort the people to

turn to God. His opposers could not restrain his zeal, and they said he had as well preach standing as upon his knees. During nearly the whole of the Revolutionary war the Methodist preachers in some parts of the country were severely maltreated. Mr. Garrettson was arrested in Dorchester county, Md., and thrust into prison. He had no bed, but lay on the bare floor, with his saddlebags for a pillow, with two large windows open upon him, but he had peace in his heart, and rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ. Before his trial came on he was released by the appeals of Mr. Asbury and the Governor of Delaware to the Governor of Maryland. He immediately began his work of preaching, and near the place where he was imprisoned he preached to many thousands, had a great revival, and among the converts were some of his persecutors.

At the close of the war the number of Methodists was found to be over 13,000, and the increase for one year was about 2,000. When peace was declared in 1783, the preachers went into the old circuits whence they had been driven by the war, and were received by the people with great joy. Religion revived, and great numbers were brought into the Church, eleven new circuits were added, and the bold itinerants were pushing their way westward after the hardy settlers. Alleghany, Cumberland, and Holston, were reported as new fields.

We have now reached a period when American Methodism took properly the form of an independent Christian Church. The war which freed the Colonies from all political allegiance to England also broke the ties between the Established Church of England and the Episcopal Churches of this country. The English Government had no authority here either civil or ecclesiastical. In this state of affairs, Mr. Wesley did not hesitate to

provide for the necessities of the Methodist Societies which had grown up under the labors of his missionaries. He ordained Dr. Thomas Coke, one of his preachers and a Presbyter in the Church of England, a Superintendent or Bishop, and sent him to America to organize the Methodist Episcopal Church. He also appointed Francis Asbury, a man tried and true, as joint Superintendent with Dr. Coke. Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey were also ordained Elders to assist the Superintendents in governing the churches and in administering baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Dr. Coke and Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey reached New York November 3rd, 1783. They came into the State of Delaware the same month, where they met Mr. Asbury.

At Barrett's Chapel a sort of Conference was held by a few preachers, and Dr. Coke having stated Mr. Wesley's views, "it was agreed to call a General Conference, to meet at Baltimore the ensuing Christmas." Mr. Garrettson was immediately sent off to Virginia to notify the preachers of this important event. Dr. Coke spent the intervening time in preaching at various places, while Asbury pondered gravely the great matter of a new and independent Church. He fasted and prayed that he "might know the will of God in the matter that was to come before the Conference." He adds: "The preachers and people seemed to be much pleased with the projected plan. I myself am led to think it is from the Lord. I am not tickled with the honor to be gained. I see danger in the way. My soul waits upon God. Oh that he may lead us in the way we should go."

On the 25th day of December, 1784, sixty out of the eighty-three American itinerant preachers met in the city of Baltimore. From the day on which it assembled

this meeting is known as "The Christmas Conference." The first act was to elect Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury as General Superintendents. The latter was first ordained deacon, then elder, and then Dr. Coke, assisted by elders, consecrated him to the office of Superintendent. The Conference also elected twelve of the leading ministers to be ordained elders. Two were set apart for the work in Nova Scotia, and one for the West Indies. Three were elected deacons.

The articles of religion and the form of discipline sent over by Mr. Wesley were adopted by the Conference, and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church was completed. The Methodists greatly rejoiced in this work. For many years they had been without the privilege of receiving the sacraments at the hands of the ministers who had led them to Christ. Of this they loudly complained, and in Virginia at one period the preachers in Conference determined to ordain men for this work, and did actually proceed to do so, but at the earnest solicitation of Asbury, and other leading men, they decided to await the action of Mr. Wesley. Now they became a Church, and the first Episcopal Church organized in America. After organizing a Church, the next step was to establish a College. The institution was named Cokesbury, after the two Bishops, and was built at Abingdon, Maryland. In their "Plan for Erecting a College," the Bishops said the Church had three objects in view: 1. To make provision for the education of the sons of the Methodist ministers. 2. To provide for the education of poor orphans. 3. To establish a Seminary for the education of "the children of our competent friends, where religion and learning may go hand in hand." "It will be expected," said the Bishops in their circular to the churches, "that all our

friends who send their children to the College will, if they be able, pay a moderate sum for their education and board; the rest will be taught and boarded, and, if our finances will allow of it, clothed *gratis*. The institution is also intended for the benefit of our young men who are called to preach, that they may receive a measure of that improvement which is highly expedient as a preparative for public service."

The College building was a fine edifice, one hundred and eight feet long and forty feet wide, and was arranged with a view to utility and comfort. The Methodists gave liberally, and five thousand dollars were secured in money subscriptions before they began to build. In December, 1787, the institution was opened, Bishop Asbury preaching on a curious text, 2 Kings iv: 40, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot." Was the text prophetic? After ten years' successful work the College was burned down. Asbury was much discouraged by this disaster, and said the "enemies of the College may rejoice, its friends need not mourn. Would any man give me ten thousand pounds a year to do and suffer again what I have done for that house, I would not do it."

But Dr. Coke was not dispirited. By the aid of a few wealthy friends he gathered nearly five thousand dollars, purchased a building in Baltimore, and reopened the College. But this house was also burned through the carelessness of some boys who made a bonfire in an old building near it; and, after losing nearly fifty thousand dollars, the Methodists quit the College business for many years.

While the Bishops were working at their College, zealous preachers were spreading Methodism in far distant places. Messrs. Garrettson and Cromwell, who had

been set apart for the work in Nova Scotia, reached that field after a stormy voyage and opened their mission. They had been preceded by William Black, a Wesleyan from England, who had preached with much success at Halifax, N. S., and in New Brunswick.

Wherever Methodists appeared they had to combat false doctrines. Here they found a singular sect called Allenites, from their leader, who bitterly opposed them. One of the leaders said to Mr. Garrettson that "death would slay more sins for her than were ever destroyed before." And she added, "As for sin, it cannot hurt me, not even adultery, murder, swearing, drunkenness, nor any other sin, can break the union between me and Christ." Another said to Garrettson, running after him, "Sir, I like part of your doctrine, but part I do not like." "What part do you not like?" said Garrettson. "You say a saint may fall." "Will you answer me one question?" said G. "Do you know that you were ever converted?" "I do." "How do matters now stand between God and your soul?" "Why, it is a winter state." "But," said G., "are you not now living in open sin against God?" The man paused, but at last confessed that he was living in open sin, and this he called the "winter state" of a saint. What awful delusion!

Wesley, who ever had his eye upon the whole field of Methodism, and who fully worked up to his maxim, "The World is my parish," no sooner heard that the missionaries had reached Nova Scotia than he sent them an encouraging letter, and urged that those who were taken into Society should be made to understand "the whole Methodist plan, and not allowed to rest in being half Christians." "Whatever they do," says the grand old leader, "let them do it with their might, and it will be well, as soon as any of them find peace with God, to ex-

hort them to go on to perfection. The more explicitly and strongly you press believers to aspire after full sanctification, as attainable now by simple faith, the more the work of God will prosper." The exhortation is as appropriate now as it was nearly a hundred years ago. It seems that Wesley had been written to for aid to help build churches in America. He referred to this in this letter, and said the English Methodists did not roll in money, and that it was very difficult to raise two or three thousand dollars to meet their current expenses. But he adds, "It is true they might do much, but it is a sad observation, they that have most money have usually least grace." Alas, that such a proverb should find a home in the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHILE the work was being pushed in the far North, the far South was opened by the great pioneer Bishop, Asbury. In February, 1785, Asbury, Jesse Lee, and Henry Willis reached Charleston, S. C. On Sunday Lee preached in an old church belonging to the Baptists. The preachers lodged with a merchant named Edgar Wells, who, though a worldly man, kindly entertained them. When the preachers came to his house he was preparing to go to the theatre, but he changed his plan and went to preaching, became a penitent, and was soon converted.

Asbury remained in the city a week or two, preaching every day and sometimes twice a day, explaining to the people "the essential doctrines of Methodism." When he closed his visit he left "some under gracious impressions." The work of these missionaries was successful in opening several new Circuits in the South. When the reports were made at Conference, Georgia, the whole State, Charleston, Georgetown, and Broad River, in South Carolina, and New River, in North Carolina, as well as Lancaster, in Virginia, and St. Mary's, in Maryland, were added to this widening field.

The whole number of members in 1786 was eighteen thousand, and of preachers one hundred and four. The increase was thirty-six hundred members and twenty-one preachers.

The Western wilds were opened by the daring hunter, Daniel Boone, in 1775. In that year he went into Kentucky, then a part of Virginia, and after a partial exploration of the country, returned with such favorable re-

ports of the fertility of the soil that numbers of hardy pioneers set out for this new country. It was settled up so rapidly, that in 1792 it was received as one of the States of the Union. As in many other parts of the world, local preachers founded Methodism in Kentucky. Rev. Mr. Tucker was descending the Ohio with a company of emigrants, when they were attacked by Indians, and Tucker was mortally wounded. He fell on his knees, and died praising God. Before he was killed, by his courage and skill, he saved the boat and the people in it from the fury of the savages.

In 1786 Revs. James Haw and Benjamin Ogden were sent to this distant and dangerous field, where they were greatly blessed in saving souls.

At the Virginia Conference volunteers were called for to go to Georgia. Thomas Humphries and John Major offered and were accepted. They made a circuit on the banks of the Savannah, and during the year organized a number of Societies, with a membership of four hundred.

In Maryland there was a great revival. On Talbot Circuit five hundred were converted, and of the older members more than a hundred professed perfect love.

Besides the general revivals in the States, the labors of Dr. Coke in the West Indies, in connection with others, resulted in a great revival among the blacks. In the island of Antigua more than a thousand were gathered into the Societies.

The most powerful revivals occurred in Virginia, beginning at Petersburg and extending southward through Brunswick, Sussex, and other counties. Jesse Lee, in his "History of the Methodists," says that Petersburg "never before witnessed such wonderful displays of the presence and love of God in the salvation of immortal souls."

The people were as deeply interested in the work as the preachers, and their exhortations were honored with God's approval, and scores were converted at prayer and class-meetings. In Sussex and Brunswick the work was most remarkable. The meetings were often held for five or six hours, and sometimes all night. At a Quarterly Meeting at Mabry's, several hundred were awakened, and above a hundred were converted in two days. At Jones', in Sussex, still a regular preaching place on the Sussex Circuit, a meeting was held in July of extraordinary power. "The sight of the mourners," says Jesse Lee, "was enough to penetrate the most careless heart. The divine power was felt among the people before the preachers came together."

Many of the young converts came to this meeting from Mabry's, and gave a fresh impulse to the services. They engaged in a prayer-meeting before the regular hour for preaching, and when the preachers came within half a mile of the church they heard the songs and shoutings of the people. When they came up, they found large numbers of penitents weeping in the church and outside in the yard. "Some were lying and struggling as if they were in the agonies of death; others lay as if they were dead. Hundreds of the believers were so overcome with the power of God that they fell down and lay helpless on the floor or ground; and some of them continued in that helpless condition for a considerable time, and were happy in God beyond description."

The next day the church-members met early to receive the sacrament. Some of the preachers went off in the woods to preach to the people that could not get into the house. The power of God fell upon the congregation "in such a manner that they roared and screamed

so loud that the preacher could not be heard, and he was compelled to stop. Many scores, of both white and black people, fell to the earth; and some lay in the deepest distress until the evening. Many of the wealthy people, both men and women, were seen lying in the dust, sweating and rolling on the ground, in their fine broadcloth or silks, crying for mercy."

Not long after this meeting closed, another began at F. Bonner's, ten miles from Petersburg. "The Lord wrought wonders among the people on that day," says Jesse Lee, "and as many as fifty professed to get converted before the meeting closed." At another meeting at Jones' Hole church, twelve miles from Petersburg, there was a meeting of great power. In the midst of the work, while awakened sinners were seen all over the house, "some on their knees, others lying in the arms of their friends, others stretched on the floor, not able to stand, and some were convulsed, with every limb as stiff as a stick, the floor of the house gave way with a loud noise, and sunk down several feet. But the people paid no attention to it, and many knew nothing of the accident, for no one was hurt."

In the course of the summer eight hundred were converted in Amelia, sixteen hundred in Sussex, and eighteen hundred in Brunswick. In these Circuits the revival was most powerful; but it spread to other fields, in which hundreds were converted. A great many found the Lord in the class-meetings, and in these gatherings of God's people for self-examination and prayer there were often wonderful displays of saving power. So deep and frequent were convictions of sin, that the people, white and black, while at work in their fields, would come together to talk about salvation—then they could sing and pray; this attracting others, the meeting would

increase in numbers and feeling until believers rejoiced and penitents found peace and rest in Christ.

While the work went on in Virginia, Bishop Asbury and his faithful and self-denying preachers were opening other fields, in which Methodism has flourished and borne rich fruits. Freeborn Garrettson pushed northward from the city of New York into a wild, unknown region, under instructions from Asbury to "form as many Circuits as he could." Garrettson was a bold pioneer, had been in Nova Scotia and other places, and had seen much of the world; but he almost feared to try the land that now lay before him up to the line of Canada. He felt uneasy in his mind, but, like all the heroic men of that period, he gave himself to "earnest prayer for direction." "I knew," he says, "that the Lord was with me. In the night season I had a dream—it seemed as if the whole country up the North river, as far as Lake Champlain, east and west, was open to my view." Several zealous young men were assigned to this field with him; he gave them instructions how to proceed, and followed in due time, holding quarterly meetings and gathering members in every field. "I had no doubt," he says, "but that the Lord would do wonders, for the young men were pious, zealous, and laborious." God met the faith of his servants. When they returned to the next Conference they reported six hundred members received into the Church.

Bishop Asbury, with several preachers, crossed the Alleghany mountains, carrying the gospel into the regions beyond. Through "mud and mire," the intrepid Bishop made his way across mountain and valley. Resting at an old deserted house in Tygart's Valley, they grazed their horses and boiled their meat. At midnight they brought up at Jones', after riding nearly fifty miles. They were in the saddle at four o'clock next morning,

and on they rode, "through devious lonely wilds, where no food might be found except what grew in the woods or was carried with them." Near midnight they stopped at the house of a man, who hissed his dogs at them, but two women, whom they had met going on to quarterly meeting, pacified the man, and they went in. "Our supper," says Asbury, "was tea. Brothers Phœbus and Cook took to the woods—old —— gave up his bed to the women. I lay along the floor on a few deer skins with the fleas." Their jaded horses had no corn, and the next day, after swimming the Monongahela, it took them ten hours to ride twenty miles to Clarkesburg. Here they preached to several hundred hearers, administered the sacrament, and pushed on. Sunday, after three o'clock, they rode thirty miles and came to Father Haymond's near midnight. This trip was one of great hardships. "O, how glad should I be," says Asbury, "of a plain, clean plank to lie on, as preferable to most of the beds; and where the beds are in a bad state the fare is worse. This country will require much work to make it tolerable." Such was the toil by which the foundations of Methodism were laid in this country.

When Asbury came back from the West to the Conference at Baltimore, he was cheered by a glorious revival. Under a sermon which he preached during the session, "the Spirit of the Lord came among the people, and sinners cried aloud for mercy." In the course of the revival which followed three hundred were added to the Church. At the Conference of 1789, the results of the great revivals of the two previous years was seen in the increase of over 11,000 members and thirty-three preachers.

Methodism was now about to enter a new field, in which it was to meet with great opposition, and in which

it was to achieve a great success. On the 17th of June, 1789, Jesse Lee preached at Norwalk, Connecticut. He obtained no church to preach in, nor even a private house. "I then went," he says, "into the street, and began to sing, and then prayed, and preached to a decent congregation." Four days later he preached at New Haven "to as many people as could crowd into the court-house. Lee formed his first Society at Stratford in September, and it was composed of three women. The next Society was formed at Reading in December, and was made up of two members, one man and one woman. Thus, from June to December, Lee, the apostle of Methodism in New England, had gathered five members. The cloud was small as a man's hand, but it was illumined by the bow of hope. In February, 1790, three preachers came to his help. Their presence revived him. At once they appointed a meeting. The place was an unfinished dwelling. Under the sermon the power of God fell upon the people. "A great cry was raised, such as was not common in that part of the world. The people were alarmed; some ran out of the house, others that were above in the loft ran to the end of the house and jumped out on the ground." Lee, now having three zealous assistants, pressed into every open door. In various places a few were gathered into the fold of Methodism, and to these others were added as the work increased.

The leader of the itinerants now determined to assail the strongholds of sin in Boston. He reached the place in November of 1790. He had been there in July of the previous year, and the zealous Garrettson had also visited the city, but no decided effort had been made to establish Methodism. Lee now went under regular orders from Asbury. He tells us how he introduced Methodist preaching, and how he introduced himself to the

Bostonians. "I went out on the Common, and standing on a table began to sing, with only a few persons present. But having prayed and begun to preach, the number increased so that there were two or three thousand attentive hearers." He preached again the next Sunday to a much larger number. Lee met with much opposition in establishing Methodism in Boston. He began to preach in private dwellings, but he was not allowed to use them long; he then hired a school-house, but after a short time had to give it up. At last a room was rented in the northern part of the city, where the few Methodists worshipped for a considerable time. They determined to build a church, and by securing help from various places as far south as Baltimore, they were able to begin the work. The corner-stone of the church was laid on the 28th of August, 1795. "It was fixed on the north end," says Lee, "and was built of wood 46 by 36 feet, with galleries in front and on both sides."

After planting Methodism in Connecticut and Massachusetts, Lee pushed on to the wild Province of Maine. He preached his first sermon at Saco in September, 1793. From this time to the close of the year he travelled through a greater portion of the Province, carefully surveying the country and preaching wherever he could collect a congregation. The first Circuit was Readfield, lying on the west side of the Kennebeck river, and distant two hundred miles from the nearest Circuit in New England.

While Lee was sowing the seed in the far northeast, Asbury was scattering it in the wild regions beyond the Alleghany. Such was the fear of Indians that the Bishop was compelled to travel with a guard. In his Journal he gives an idea of the perils through which he passed in carrying the "glad tidings of salvation to the dwellers in the

wilderness." "This morning we again swam the Laurel river and the west fork thereof. My horse was ready to fall. I was steeped with water up to the waist. How much I have suffered in this journey is only known to God and myself."

Again he says, speaking of his travels and of the rumor of hostile Indians, "We came the old way by Scagg's Creek and Rock Castle, as it is a road less frequented by the savages. My body by this time was well tired. I had a violent fever and pain in my head; and I stretched myself on the cold ground, and borrowing clothes to keep me warm, by the mercy of God I slept five hours. Next morning we set off early, and passed beyond Richland Creek. Here we were in danger, if anywhere. I could have slept, but was afraid. Seeing the drowsiness of the company, I walked the encampment and watched the sentries all night." But no Indian came. They moved on next morning, and safely reached the settlements. Asbury adds, "Rest, poor house of clay, from such exertions! Return, O my soul, to thy rest."

CHAPTER XX.

HAVING traced the progress of Methodism in America for twenty years, we now return to Wesley and his work in England. We have said that in 1769 Wesley sent Boardman and Pillmore to America as missionaries. It is a singular fact that Wesley made the first missionary collection in England the same year that the Methodists in New York opened their rigging loft. In 1767 he took a collection for Missions at Newcastle. Soon after, he came to London to hold the Conference. Now, for the first time, a complete list of the members was given. Twenty-five thousand nine hundred and eleven had been gathered as the fruit of incessant toil in England, Scotland, and Ireland. There were forty-one Circuits, and one hundred and four itinerants. This was the result of twenty-eight years' work.

Wesley and Whitefield were both growing old, but neither paused in the great work. After one of his grand field days, Whitefield wrote: "I am just come from my field throne. Thousands and thousands attended by eight in the morning. Let me enjoy myself in my delightful itinerancy. It is good, both for my body and soul."

Wesley was abreast of his ardent brother in all work. One of his rules was never to disappoint a congregation. Peter Martin, a parish sexton at Helstone for sixty-five years, related an anecdote which shows Wesley's courage. "One day he came," says Martin, "and obtained my master's leave for me to drive him to St. Ives. On arriving at Hayle, we found the roads between that

place and St. Ives overflown by the rising tide. Mr. Wesley was resolved to go on; for he said he had to preach at St. Ives at a certain hour, and must be there. Looking out of the carriage window, he called, 'Take the sea! take the sea!' In a moment I dashed into the waves, and was quickly involved in a world of waters. The horses were swimming, and the wheels of the carriage not unfrequently sunk into deep hollows in the sands. I expected every moment to be drowned, but heard Mr. Wesley's voice and saw his long white hair dripping with salt water. 'What is your name, driver?' he calmly asked. I answered, 'Peter.' 'Peter,' said he, 'Peter, fear not; thou shalt not sink.' With vigorous whipping, I again urged on the flagging horses, and at last got safely over. Mr. Wesley's first care was to see me comfortably lodged at the tavern; and then, totally unmindful of himself, and drenched as he was with the dashing waves, he proceeded to the chapel and preached according to his appointment."

Wesley carried the interests of all the work upon his heart all the time. At the request of a gentleman from New England, he made a collection for the Indian schools in America. He says with much point: "A large sum of money is now collected; but will money convert heathens? Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit, and nothing can stand before them; but without this, what good will gold or silver do? No more than lead or iron. They have, indeed, sent thousands to hell, but never yet brought a soul to heaven." True, we must have men of the right spirit in the Mission work, but they must also have means to keep them alive while doing their hard work. Men and money are both needed to carry the gospel to the heathen.

In his work, Wesley had the happiness to know that

Methodism brought blessings to all classes. One of the nobles of England, who heard the gospel from the lips of the despised itinerants, was brought to know Christ as a Saviour. His life was pure and faithful, and when this man, the Earl of Buchan, came to die, his last words were, "Happy, happy, happy!" In Scotland a minister of the Kirk met one of his hearers, a poor old woman, on the street, and said to her, "Oh, Janet, where have ye been, woman? I have no' seen ye at the Kirk for long." "I go," said Janet, "among the Methodists." "Among the Methodists!" quoth the minister; "why, what gude get ye there, woman?" "Glory to God!" replied Janet. "I do get gude; for God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven me aw my sins!" "Ah, Janet," said the minister, "be not high-minded, but fear; the devil is a cunning adversary." "I dunna' care a button for the devil," answered Janet; "I've gotten him under my feet. I ken the devil can do muckle deal, but there is one thing he canna' do." "What is that, Janet?" "He canna' shed abroad the love of God in my heart; and I am sure I've got it there!" "Weel, weel!" replied the good tempered man, "if ye have got it there, Janet, hold it fast, and never let it go."

One great power of Methodism was in its hymns, and we have noticed the happy effects produced by the hearty singing of the Wesleyans. In this delightful part of public worship Wesley sought to train his people with great care. In view of this fact the reader can well appreciate the following indignant paragraph: He was invited to preach in a parish church, and thus spoke of the singing: "I was greatly disgusted at the manner of the singing. 1. Twelve or fourteen persons kept it all to themselves, and quite shut out the congregation. 2. These repeated the same words, contrary to all sense and

reason, six or eight times over. 3. According to the shocking custom of modern music, different persons sang different words at one and the same moment; an intolerable insult on common sense, and utterly incompatible with any devotion." There was no better judge of music and good singing than John Wesley. At the Conference he gave the following directions on congregational singing: "Beware of *formality* in singing, or it will creep in upon us unawares. Is it not creeping on already, by those complex tunes which it is scarce possible to sing with devotion? Such is, 'Praise the Lord, ye blessed ones!' Such the long quavering Hallelujah, annexed to the Morning Song tune, which I defy any man living to sing devoutly. The repeating the same word so often, especially where another repeats different words, shocks all common sense, brings in dead formality, and has no more of religion in it than a Lancashire hornpipe. Do not suffer the people to sing too slow. This naturally tends to formality, and is brought in by those who have very strong or weak voices. Why should not the assistant see that they be taught to sing in every large society?"

Wesley was now (1768) in his sixty-sixth year, but he went on with the zeal and vigor of early youth. In a tour in Cornwall he preached for eight days together, three or four times a day, and mostly in the open air, and he says: "I hardly felt any weariness, first or last." In this country his lodgings were not of the best. At one place his bed-room was filled with fish and eels which made him glad to escape from it. In his journeys, Wesley rode for a great part of his life on horseback, and he made an entry in his Journal in reference to his experience in studying on horseback. "Nearly thirty years ago," he says, "I was thinking, 'How is it that no horse

ever stumbles while I am reading?" (History, poetry, and philosophy, I commonly read on horseback, having other employment at other times.) No account can possibly be given but this: because, then I throw the reins on his neck. I then set myself to observe; and I aver, that, in riding above a hundred thousand miles, I scarce ever remember any horse (except two that would fall head over heels any way), to fall, or make a considerable stumble, while I rode with a slack rein. To fancy, therefore, that a tight rein prevents stumbling is a capital blunder. I have repeated the trial more frequently than most men in the kingdom can do. A slack rein will prevent stumbling if anything will. But in some horses nothing can."

The reports which reached England of the rapid progress of Methodism in America excited in the mind of Wesley a strong desire to go to the help of his faithful missionaries. But to this there were very serious obstacles. He was nearly seventy years old; if he should leave England, who would take the management of the work at home? There was certainly no man who could supply his place; and if he should determine to go, the Methodists would rise against it all over the kingdom. He said: "If I go to America, I must do a thing which I hate as bad as I hate the devil." "What is that?" asked a friend. "I must keep a *secret*"—meaning he must conceal his purpose from the Societies.

The time was now near when Methodism was to lose one of its great leaders. Whitefield was about to make his last voyage to America. He was very feeble in body, but his zeal was flaming out in all its brightness and power. For six months before he sailed he rambled over England, preaching three or four times a week to great multitudes, glorying in the signs of God's ap-

proval, and exclaiming: "Field preaching for ever!" In September, 1769, he left the shores of England. In one year from that time he died at Newburyport, Massachusetts. The last year that he spent in America was one of glorious toil. From Georgia to New England he moved as a pillar of gospel fire. The day before his death he preached two hours in the open air. Next morning at six he entered paradise. Just before he began his last sermon a friend said to him: "Sir, you are more fit to go to bed than to preach." "True," said the dying hero, and then clasping his hands, he said: "Lord Jesus, I am weary *in* thy work, but not *of* thy work." Whitefield's wish was to be buried in the yard of his own chapel in London, and he wanted the Wesleys to be buried by his side. "We will all lie together," he says; "you refused them entrance here while living; they can do you no harm when they are dead." It had been agreed between Wesley and Whitefield that whichever lived longest should preach the funeral of the deceased. In Tottenham Court chapel Wesley discharged the sad duty.

A great multitude gathered. "It was," says Wesley, "an awful season. All were as still as night." The same day he preached in the afternoon in Whitefield's tabernacle in Moorfields. His text was, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." In the death of Whitefield the Church lost a truly apostolic worker. In a ministry of thirty-four years he traversed Great Britain, visited the West Indies, and preached over the inhabited portion of this country. He delivered eighteen thousand sermons, crossed the ocean many times in slow sailing ships, faced mobs with a calm courage, and rejoiced over tens of thousands brought to Christ by his unequalled ser-

mons. It has been truly said of him : "He was a human *seraph*, and burnt out in the blaze of his own fire."

The fall of Whitefield smote heavily the heart of Wesley, but while he staggered under the blow, he felt ready to take the place of the great evangelist in the American field. In December, 1770, he wrote to a friend : "If I live till spring, and should have a clear, pressing call, I am as ready to embark for America as for Ireland. All places are alike to me. I am attached to none in particular. Wherever the work of the Lord is to be carried on, *that* is my place for *to-day*. And as we live only for *to-day*, it is not our part to take thought for *to-morrow*." But Wesley could not leave the home field. This he continued to cultivate with increasing diligence and care. The days of violent persecution were almost over, but he had long journeys, scant fare, hard beds, and occasionally an outrage from some brute in human form. On one occasion, "a ruffian struck him violently in the face, when, with tears starting from his eyes, the venerable saint acted upon the precept of his Master, 'Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;' a display of heroic meekness which cowed the brutal coward, and made him slink away into the ignoble crowd."

No man could be more unwilling than Wesley to give up a preaching place, and no man could have a higher idea of the value of working to save souls. He was told that at a certain place there was but a poor prospect of doing good, but few people attended, and he was urged to drop the chapel. "Does the old woman," asked he, "that sits in the corner of the pew, still attend?" "O yes," was the answer, "she never misses." "Then, for her sake, keep going," said Wesley. In a letter to Joseph Benson he said : "It is a shame for any Method-

ist preacher to confine himself to one place. We are debtors to all the world. We are called to warn every one, to exhort every one, if by any means we may save some. I love prayer-meetings, and wish they were set up in every corner of the town."

Wesley was now nearly seventy years old (1772), but not for a moment did he cease his work. He urged his preachers and people to seek the great blessing of Christian perfection. In a letter to his brother, he deploras the neglect of this doctrine. "I find," he says, "almost all our preachers, in every Circuit, have done with Christian perfection. They say they believe it, but they never preach it, or not once a quarter. What is to be done? Shall we let it drop, or make a point of it? Oh, what a thing it is to have the care of souls! You and I are called to this; to save souls from death; to watch over them as those that must give account! If our office implied no more than preaching a few times a week, I could play with it, so might you. But how small a part of our duty is this! God says to you, as well as to me, 'Do all thou canst, be it more or less, to save the souls for whom my Son has died.' Let this voice be ever sounding in our ears, then shall we give up our account with joy. I am ashamed of my indolence and inactivity. Your business, as well as mine, is to save souls. I think every day lost which is not (mainly, at least,) employed in this thing."

The pastoral work Wesley prized as of the greatest value in building his members up in the faith. In one of his favorite towns he found that the Society had decreased. "This," he says, "I can impute to nothing but the want of visiting from house to house, without which the people will hardly increase in number or grace." He, though old and feeble, and suffering constantly with

a very painful disease, led the way in this work. In Bristol he "visited the whole Society, from house to house." "I know no branch of the pastoral office which is of greater importance than this. But it is so grievous to flesh and blood, that I can prevail on few, even of our preachers, to undertake it."

The wide-spread suffering among the poor touched the heart of Wesley, and he made the most earnest efforts to secure them relief. In mid-winter he says: "Being greatly embarrassed by the necessities of the poor, we spread all our wants before God in solemn prayer, believing that he would sooner 'make windows in heaven,' than suffer his truth to fail." He published a letter in one of the leading papers, in which he described the awful condition of the poor all over the kingdom, and pointed out some of the causes of the scarcity of food, and the general distress. He asked, "Why is bread-corn so dear?" and answered, "Because such immense quantities of it are continually consumed by *distilling*. Indeed, an eminent distiller, near London, hearing this, warmly replied, 'Nay, my partner and I generally distil *but a thousand quarters* of corn a week.' Perhaps so. Suppose five-and-twenty distillers, in and near the town, consume each only the same quantity. Here are five-and-twenty thousand quarters a week, that is, about twelve hundred and fifty thousand quarters a year, consumed in and about London! Add the distillers throughout England, and have we not reason to believe that half of the wheat produced in the kingdom is every year consumed, not by so harmless a way as throwing it into the sea; but by converting it into deadly poison—poison that naturally destroys, not only the strength and life, but also the morals, of our countrymen!"

The great evil which Wesley deplotes is still the great

curse of England and this country, and indeed of the world.

To find out the helpless and deserving poor a number of pious Methodists organized themselves into a band for work in visiting the workhouses, and by prayer, reading, and exhortation, sought to lead the inmates to Christ. This organization still exists, and is known as "The Christian Community," and in its ninety-fifth annual report it is said that the society was established under the patronage of Rev. John Wesley in 1772. This little band of workers, put in shape by the abused Methodist leader, has grown into a great power for good in the midst of the wretched poor of vast London. In one year 463 services were held in the open air, 1,400 addresses were delivered, and a quarter of a million of tracts distributed. In this work one hundred and twenty-four persons are employed, and nearly all of them have appointments every week. This is the great work that has grown out of the little band sent out by Wesley to talk and pray with the huge mass of London paupers and vagabonds. To earnest work of this sort, Wesley urged his preachers to add earnest words from the pulpit. In a letter to his brother he says: "If we only join faith and works in all our preaching, we shall not fail of a blessing. But of all preaching, what is usually called gospel preaching is the most useless, if not the most mischievous; a dull, yea, or lively harangue on the sufferings of Christ, or salvation by faith, without strongly inculcating holiness. I see, more and more, that this naturally tends to drive holiness out of the world."

Wesley was oppressed by many cares, and assailed with the utmost vehemence by his doctrinal opponents, in what is known as the Calvinistic controversy, but he

did not for a moment relax his efforts to save souls. Fletcher came to his help in the controversy with the Calvinists, and has left us the proof of his genius as a writer and his ability as a reasoner in his *Checks to Antinomianism*, which are or ought to be in the hands of every reading Methodist. With the details of this bitter controversy we shall not weary our readers.

The itinerancy Wesley felt to be essential to the success of Methodism. He says: "While I live itinerant preachers shall be itinerants. I have too much regard for the bodies and souls of our preachers to let them be confined to one place any more." He had had some trouble on this score in Scotland, and says, "I have weighed the matter, and will serve the Scots as we do the English or leave them." This was written to Joseph Benson, who was then laboring in Scotland. He gives the following picture of Wesley, and coming from such a man as Benson, it is of real value:

"I was," says he, "constantly with him for a week. I had an opportunity of examining narrowly his spirit and conduct; and, I assure you, I am more than ever persuaded, he is *a none such*. I know not his fellow, first, for abilities, natural and acquired; and, secondly, for his incomparable diligence in the application of those abilities to the best of employments. His lively fancy, tenacious memory, clear understanding, ready elocution, manly courage, indefatigable industry, really amaze me. I admire, but wish in vain to imitate, his diligent improvement of every moment of time; his wonderful exactness even in little things; the order and regularity wherewith he does and treats everything he takes in hand; together with his quick dispatch of business, and calm, cheerful serenity of soul. I ought not to omit to mention, what is very manifest to all who know him, his

resolution, which no shocks of opposition can shake; his patience, which no length of trials can weary; his zeal for the glory of God and the good of man, which no waters of persecution or tribulation have yet been able to quench. Happy man! Long hast thou borne the burden and heat of the day, amidst the insults of foes, and the base treachery of seeming friends; but thou shalt rest from thy labors, and thy works shall follow thee!"

CHAPTER XXI.

JOHN WESLEY had a faith in God's providence over his people that nothing could shake. This, added to his natural courage, was the cause of his calmness in the midst of all dangers. He had a narrow escape from death by drowning, as we have already told. The following is his account of another wonderful deliverance from a sudden and awful death. The Mrs. Smith to whom he refers was the daughter of his wife :

"Monday, June 20.—About nine, I set out for Horsley, with Mr. Hopper and Mr. Smith. I took Mrs. Smith, and her two little girls, in the chaise with me. About two miles from the town, just on the brow of the hill, on a sudden both the horses set out, without any visible cause, and flew down the hill like an arrow. In a minute, John fell off the coach-box. The horses then went on full speed, sometimes to the edge of the ditch on the right, sometimes on the left. A cart came up against them; they avoided it as exactly as if the man had been on the box.—A narrow bridge was at the foot of the hill. They went directly over the middle of it. They ran up the next hill with the same speed; many persons meeting us, but getting out of the way. Near the top of the hill was a gate, which led into a farmer's yard. It stood open. They turned short, and run through it, without touching the gate on one side, or the post on the other. I thought, 'The gate which is on the other side of the yard, and is shut, will stop them;' but they rushed through it, as if it had been a cobweb, and galloped on through the corn-field. The little girls cried out,

‘Grandpapa, save us!’ I told them, ‘Nothing will hurt you: do not be afraid;’ feeling no more fear or care than if I had been sitting in my study. The horses ran on, till they came to the edge of a steep precipice. Just then Mr. Smith, who could not overtake us before, galloped in between. They stopped in a moment. Had they gone on ever so little, he and we must have gone down together!”

On this we will give his own comment:

“I am persuaded, that both evil and good angels had a large share in this transaction: how large we do not know now; but we shall know hereafter. I think some of the most remarkable circumstances were: (1) Both the horses, which were tame and quiet as could be, starting out in a moment, just at the top of the hill, and running down full speed. (2) The coachman’s being thrown on his head with such violence, and yet not hurt at all. (3) The chaise running again and again to the edge of each ditch, and yet not into it. (4) The avoiding the cart. (5) The keeping just the middle of the bridge. (6) The turning short through the first gate, in a manner that no coachman in England could have turned them, when in full gallop. (7) The going through the second gate as if it had been but smoke, without slackening their pace at all. This would have been impossible, had not the end of the chariot pole struck exactly on the centre of the gate; whence the whole, by the sudden impetuous shock, was broke into small pieces. Lastly, that Mr. Smith struck in just then: in a minute more we had been down the precipice. ‘Let those give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the hand of the enemy!’”

The last twenty years of Wesley’s life were as full of Christian labor as any previous period. In the

midst of wars and rumors of wars, in the midst of angry religious disputes and political disturbances in the nation, he went on with his great work of preaching holiness. The American Revolutionary War hindered for a time the work of Methodism in the Colonies; but it made a lodgment in the cold region of Newfoundland, and there has borne rich fruits. To a London Methodist is due the honor of planting the seed in Newfoundland. John Hoskins and his son, a lad of sixteen, came to the island for the purpose of earning money enough to take them to New England, where he wished to open a school. He landed at Trinity unknown and without money. He found himself in a "rocky, desolate country," and in a village of a "few low, mean huts, built of wood." He went into one of these and asked for something to eat. A good woman gave him some bread and seal meat. He saw the minister of the place, who advised him to go and open a school at a place called Old Pelican, where about fifty families lived. He went and opened school. The people were glad of his coming, and, as they had no religious worship, the new schoolmaster began to read the Church prayers and Wesley's sermons. The people stood at a distance, and looked at him with wonder. He soon began to add exhortation to his sermon-reading. Some few grew serious, several became penitent, and at last a class of sixteen seekers was formed. Some of these were soon converted; an Irish merchant, Arthur Thomy, came to his help, preached and confirmed the words of Hoskins, and the society soon grew to forty members with eight believers. The work spread, but not without persecution. Thomy was hated by the bigoted Irish, and they often threatened to kill him. Once he was caught and daubed all over with tar. But he was saved from fur-

ther violence, the revival went on, and in a few years Newfoundland was one of Wesley's Circuits.

It is wonderful that Wesley was able to do so much work. He was one of the most systematic and careful men that ever lived. Yet his zeal sometimes carried him beyond his strength. In Ireland he was taken suddenly sick, and a doctor was sent for to see him. "You must rest," said the doctor. "I cannot," said Wesley. "I have appointed to preach in several places, and must preach as long as I can speak." The doctor gave him medicine, and off he went. But in a day or two he was compelled to take his bed. For three days he lay as if dead. Sometimes his pulse could not be felt. While in this state his travelling companion, Samuel Bradburn, came with medicine in a cup, and said: "Sir, you must take this." Wesley writes: "I thought, I will if I can swallow, to please him; for it will do neither harm nor good. Immediately it set me to vomiting; my heart began to beat, and my pulse to play again; and from that hour the extremity of the symptoms abated." Six days afterwards he was on the road again, "trusting in God." But something besides Samuel Bradburn's cup of physic had to do with his recovery. He lay ill in the house of a devoted Methodist. The mother of the family and her daughter nursed him tenderly. Great concern was felt for his recovery, and a few friends met at the house to pray that, as in the case of Hezekiah, God would add to his days fifteen years. As they were praying, the lady rose from her knees, and said: "The prayer is answered." Wesley began to recover, and lived a little over fifteen years. But this is not all. Alexander Mather, one of Wesley's preachers, was in England at the time, and read in the newspapers that Wesley was dead. He says he could not believe it, and before he went to

preach he opened his Bible on the words: "Behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years." He then went to the chapel and began to pray that the promise might be fulfilled in Wesley's case. As Mr. Tyerman says, who records these facts, "The skeptic will sneer, but the Christian will exercise an unfaltering faith in the glorious text which, in the history of the Church, has been confirmed in instances without number, 'The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'"

Wesley was beloved by children because he took notice of them and always had a kind word for them in the families where he lodged. Once he came to the house of a local preacher, who kept a boarding-school. While he was there two of the boys had a fight, and beat and scratched each other very much. The lady of the house brought the angry little fellows to Wesley. He talked to them kindly, and repeated to them these lines:

" Birds in their little nests agree,
And 'tis a shameful sight,
When children of one family
Fall out, and chide, and fight."

"You must make up with each other," he said; "go and shake hands." They did so. "Now," said he, "put your arms round each other's neck, and kiss each other." They obeyed. "Now," said he, "come to me." He then took two pieces of bread and butter, folded them together, and told each boy to take a part. He then said: "Now, you have broken bread together." He then put his hands upon their heads and blessed them. The boys became friends, and never forgot Wesley's blessing.

When Wesley was nearly seventy-five a most touching scene took place at one of his Conferences. Mr.

Fletcher, who had been a long time in bad health, came to meet Wesley and his preachers. He was very feeble, and came into the room leaning on the arm of a friend and looking as pale as a ghost. As soon as the preachers saw him they all stood up, and Wesley went forward to meet his dear friend. Fletcher began to talk to the preachers, and before he had said a dozen words they were all in tears. Wesley feared that Fletcher would talk too much and injure himself, and fell on his knees at his side and began to pray. Down knelt all the preachers and joined their leader in prayer. Wesley prayed earnestly that his friend might be spared to them a little longer, and his faith and fervor increased to such a degree that at last he closed his prayer by exclaiming, in strong confidence that sent a thrill through every heart: "He shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." God heard and answered the prayer, for Fletcher lived, though in feebleness, eight years before he entered heaven.

People have often wondered how the great Methodist leader could do so much work. He tells us how he was able to do it. In a letter to a friend he says: "You do not understand my manner of life. Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry, because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit. It is true, I travel four or five thousand miles in a year; but I generally travel alone in my carriage, and, consequently, am as retired ten hours in a day as if I was in a wilderness. On other days I never spend less than three hours, frequently ten or twelve, in the day alone. So there are few persons in the kingdom who spend so many hours secluded from all company. Yet I find time to visit the sick and the poor; and I must do it, if I believe the Bible, if I believe

these are the marks whereby the Shepherd of Israel will know and judge his sheep at the great day. Therefore, when there are time and opportunity for it, who can doubt but this is a matter of absolute duty? When I was at Oxford, and lived almost like a hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amidst the noise and bustle of the world. God taught me better by my own experience. I had ten times more business in America (that is, at intervals,) than ever I had in my life; but it was no hindrance to silence of spirit."

God in his providence raised up to help Wesley men just suited to such work as he had to do. When the health of Fletcher failed, Wesley met with Thomas Coke. Hearing that Wesley was to preach at a certain place, Coke rode twenty miles to see him. They talked much about the work of God, and "a union then began," says Wesley, "which I trust shall never end." Coke, in the conversation, expressed a doubt of the propriety of confining himself to one congregation. Wesley clasped his hands and said: "Brother, go out, go out, and preach the gospel to all the world!" After this the course of Coke was determined, and he became one of the most zealous preachers of Methodism and the father of Methodist Missions.

In the prisons of England, among the wretched criminals and poor debtors, Wesley delighted to work. For his help in London God raised up a man whose labors are worthy of a record with the Christian heroes of any age. "Is it not advisable for us to visit all the jails we can?" said the Conference of 1778. The answer was, "By all means. There cannot be a greater charity." The man found specially fitted for this work was Silas Told. He spent his early life as a sailor. When about

thirty years old he was introduced to the Methodists and soon became a zealous member. Wesley made him master of the Foundry School. He began to visit the London prisons, and soon extended his work, until there was not a prison in London, and hardly a work-house within twelve miles of it, where Silas was not a frequent and welcome visitor. For above thirty years he gave himself to this work. Criminals of every grade looked upon him as a friend sent them from heaven. He met with much opposition at first; but he worked on until the rude turnkeys and heartless hangmen listened to his exhortations with sobs and tears. Told went on with his work until nearly three-score and ten. He died in peace, and Wesley said of him: "I buried all that was mortal of honest Silas Told. For many years he attended the malefactors in Newgate without fee or reward, and I suppose no man for this hundred years has been so successful in that melancholy office. God had given him peculiar talents for it, and he had amazing success therein. The greatest part of those whom he attended died in peace, and many of them in the triumphs of faith." In the same year that this humble Christian worker died, in Paris the great infidel, Voltaire, died at the age of eighty-five. His death was such as we might look for from a hardened sinner. Wesley heard that the works of Voltaire were to be published in England by one of the chaplains of George III; and, in his godly indignation, he wrote a letter, which is not in his works, but which Mr. Tyerman gives in his life. As it shows the true source of the incident which occurred at the bedside of the dying infidel, we here give it entire:

"JANUARY 4, 1779.

"Sir,—In September last, a gentleman near Bristol

showed me a letter which he had received from the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, at Paris. I desired him to give a transcript of one part of it, which he immediately did. It was as follows :

“ ‘ Mr. Voltaire sent for Monsieur Tronclils, first physician to the Duke of Orleans (one of his converts to infidelity), and said to him : ‘ Sir, I desire you to save my life. I will give you half my fortune if you will lengthen out my days only six months. If not, I shall go to the devil and carry you with me.’

“ This is the man to whom a crowned head pays such a violent compliment ! Nay, this is the man whose works are now publishing by a divine of our own Church ; yea, a chaplain to his majesty. Pity but the king should know it. If the publisher of that poor wretch’s works writes a panegyric upon him or them, I shall think it my duty to show the real value of those writings.

“ I am, sir, your humble servant,

“ J. WESLEY.”

So died the poor, wretched man that defied and scoffed at the name of Jesus, and closed his letters, it is said, to his infidel friends, whom he urged to oppose his religion, with the words, “ Crush the wretch !”

CHAPTER XXII.

WE do not wish to claim more for Wesley and Methodism than they merit, but we think it but fair and just to give them full credit for all the work done for the enlightenment and salvation of the world. Some of our readers may not be aware that the first Bible Society formed in England, and so far as we know, in the world, was the work of Methodists. In 1779 Geo. Cussons and John Davis, two Methodists, after leaving the leader's meeting, fell into a conversation on the subject of circulating the Holy Scriptures, and determined to raise a fund for supplying soldiers with pocket-Bibles. A few friends joined them, and a Society was formed for this purpose. They held monthly meetings. The first parcel of Bibles was sent out from Wesley's West Street chapel, and the first sermon in behalf of the Society was preached in the same chapel by Rev. Mr. Collins, from the words: "And the Philistines were afraid; for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore." "Thus arose," says Tyerman, "the Naval and Military Bible Society—twenty-five years before the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804—a society still in active operation, and, we believe, the oldest association for the circulation of the word of God that now exists."

In the travels of Wesley, in old age, over the fields where he had formerly met furious mobs, he now found large congregations of quiet and attentive hearers. The following anecdote will show that our founder always

kept before him the fact that the mission of the gospel is specially to the poor: At Blackburn, Wesley's host took him to see a new chapel nearly completed. On looking at it, Wesley said: "Mr. Banning, I have a favor to ask. Let there be no pews in the body of this chapel except for the leading singers. Be sure to make accommodation for the poor. *They* are God's building *materials* in the erecting of His church. The rich make good scaffolding, but bad *materials*." Have we not lost sight of this sound advice of Wesley in the building of costly churches from which the poor are almost wholly excluded?

To hear the eloquent old man thousands gathered by the most convenient points as he passed along, and by their earnest attention showed the change that had been wrought in almost every part of England. Sometimes a rude or drunken man made disturbance, but not often. Wesley describes a scene in which a wife's power is exemplified: "Our friends at Newark were divided as to the place where I should preach. At length they found a convenient place, covered on three sides, and on the fourth open to the street. It contained two or three thousand people well, who appeared to hear as for life. Only one big man, exceeding drunk, was very noisy and turbulent, till his wife seized him by the collar, gave him two or three hearty boxes on the ear, and dragged him away like a calf. But at length he got out of her hands, crept in among the people, and stood as quiet as a lamb."

This incessant travelling and preaching was done by a man nigh eighty years old. "I can hardly think," says Wesley June 28, 1780, "I am entered this day into the seventy-eighth year of my age. By the blessing of God I am just the same as when I entered the twenty-

eighth. This has God wrought chiefly by my constant exercise, my rising early, and preaching morning and evening." Any place where there were souls to hear the Word was good enough for him to preach in. "They chose for me," he says, "a lamentable place, full of dirt and dust, but without the least shelter from the scorching sun. This few could bear; so we had only a small company of as stupid people as I ever saw." But the heroic old man bore it, and delivered his message.

At the Conference Wesley sought to impress his preachers with the greatness of their work. Early preaching he insisted on. If a preacher could get twenty hearers at 5 o'clock in the morning, he was to preach; if less, he was to sing and pray. "Observe," he said to them, "it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save all the souls you can, to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and, with all your power, to build them up in the Lord. And remember! a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist Discipline! Therefore, you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you." The duty of fasting Wesley insisted upon, and said that much spiritual feebleness and faintness grew out of the neglect of it. "Let you and I," he says, "every Friday avow this duty throughout the nation by touching no tea, coffee, or chocolate, in the morning; but if we want it, half-a-pint of milk or water gruel. Let us dine on potatoes, and (if we need it) eat three or four ounces of flesh in the evening. At other times, let us eat no flesh-suppers. These exceeding tend to breed nervous disorders." Wesley was a pattern of neatness, and enjoined upon his people to be

neat and clean. Some complained to him that some of the preachers' wives did not keep the parsonages clean. He said: "Let none that has spoiled one ever live in another. But what a shame is this! A preacher's wife should be a pattern of cleanliness, in person, clothes, and habitation. Let nothing slatternly be seen about her; no rags, no dirt, no litter. And she should be a pattern of industry; always at work for herself, her husband, or the poor."

Wesley's last ten years on earth were as full of labor as if he had only been in middle life. He watched over his societies with the care of a father, and corrected every error among the Methodists as soon as he saw it. "I put a stop," he says, "to a bad custom which I found creeping in at Warrenton. A few men, who had fine voices, sang a psalm which no one knew, in a tune fit for an opera, wherein three, four or five persons sung different words at the same time! What an insult upon common sense! What a burlesque upon public worship! No custom can excuse such a mixture of profaneness and absurdity."

We commend this passage to the notice of those who are engaged in the work of changing the grand old tunes of Methodism into the ear-stunning operas of the present day.

Wesley loved to go among the hearty Irish Methodists, and planned an extensive tour in that country, but was hindered as he believed providentially. He took a ship at Liverpool and was hardly out of the harbor when a violent storm came on. In an hour he was affected most strangely. For two days he could swallow nothing solid that was larger than a pea, and was bruised and sore from head to foot. The storm grew worse. The water in the hold was three feet deep. The ship would

not obey the helm, and was driving on a lee-shore. Mr. Wesley says :

“I called our brethren, Floyd, Snowden, and Bradford, to prayers ; and we found free access to the throne of grace. Soon after, we got, I know not how, into Holyhead harbour, after being sufficiently buffeted by the winds and waves for two days and two nights. The more I considered, the more I was convinced, it was not the will of God I should go to Ireland at this time. So we went into the stage-coach without delay and the next evening came to Chester.”

One of the most successful means employed by Wesley for the spreading of religious knowledge was, as we have already seen, by the circulation of books, printed sermons, and short tracts.

The Religious Tract Society was established in 1799, but seventeen years before this Wesley founded such a Society. In 1783 he published “A Plan of the Society Instituted in January 1782 to Distribute Religious Tracts Among the Poor.”

He had only three rules—

“1. Every member must subscribe half a guinea, or more, annually.

“2. A proportionable quota of tracts shall be delivered yearly to each subscriber, according to his subscription, and as nearly as possible at prime cost, and carriage paid.

“3. Every subscriber shall have a right to choose his own tracts, if he please ; otherwise, he will receive a proportionable variety of the whole.”

Of this work Wesley said :

“I cannot but earnestly recommend this to all those who desire to see true scriptural Christianity spread throughout these nations. Men wholly unawakened will

not take pains to read the Bible. They have no relish for it. But a small tract may engage their attention for half an hour;—and may, by the blessing of God, prepare them for going forward.”

Tract distribution has been one of the great works of Methodism from that time to the present.

In 1867 the English Book-Room in City Road, London, sold more than a million and a half of tracts issued from its own presses.

When Wesley entered his eightieth year he wrote :

“Blessed be God! my time is not labor and sorrow. I find no more pain or bodily infirmity than at five-and-twenty. This I still impute: 1. To the power of God, fitting me for what he calls me to. 2. To my travelling four or five thousand miles a year. 3. To my sleeping night or day, whenever I want it. 4. To my rising at a set hour. 5. To my constant preaching, particularly in the morning.” And adds: “I often preach abroad (that is, in the open air,) in winter as well as summer.”

At this great age he crossed over to Holland and spent seventeen days in that country. While there he entered his eighty-first year and wrote :

“By the mercy of God my eyes are not waxed dim, and what little strength of body or mind I had thirty years since, just the same I have now. God grant I may never live to be useless! Rather may I

‘My body with my charge lay down

And cease at once to work and live!’”

When he came over to England and met his Conference he could well exclaim, “What hath God wrought!”

In England there were 45,955 Methodists, in America 15,740, in Antigua 2,000, besides those in Nova Scotia, that had been gathered in by William Black.

Though Wesley speaks of his good health at his great age, yet he had occasionally alarming spells of sickness. In 1783 he lay for eighteen days between life and death.

In his illness he said to his friend and nurse, Joseph Bradford :

“I have been reflecting on my past life. I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavoring, in my poor way, to do a little good to my fellow-creatures ; and, now, it is probable that there are but a few steps between me and death ; and what have I to trust to for salvation ? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this :

‘I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.’”

The work of Wesley at his age has no parallel. “Here we have,” says Mr. Tyerman, “not a man of Herculean frame, big, brawny, and heavy, fed on the daintiest diet, and stimulated with the costliest wines, but a man small in stature, his weight eight stones and ten pounds, (exactly the same as it was fourteen years before,) his age eighty, without indulgences, feeding, for eight months in every year, chiefly at the tables of the poor, sleeping on all sorts of beds and in all sorts of rooms, without a wife, without a child, really without a home ; and yet a man always cheerful, always happy, always hard at work, flying with all the sprightliness of youth throughout the three kingdoms, preaching twice every day, indoors and out of doors, in churches, chapels, cottages, and sheds, and everywhere superintending the complex and growing interests of the numerous societies which had sprung into buoyant being through the labors of himself and

his godly helpers. The man was a marvel, such as the world sees only now and then."

At Stockton, on one of his preaching tours, he "found an uncommon work of God among the children," upwards of sixty of whom, from six to fourteen, were under serious impressions and desirous to save their souls. Here a touching scene was witnessed: "As soon as I came down from the desk," he says, "I was enclosed by a body of children; all of whom sunk down upon their knees: so I kneeled down myself and began praying for them." Beautiful picture this, well worth painting. No wonder that he adds: "Abundance of people ran back into the house. The fire kindled, and ran from heart to heart, till few, if any, were unaffected. Is not this a new thing in the earth? God begins his work in children. Thus it has been also in Cornwall, Manchester, and Epsworth. Thus the flame spreads to those of riper years; till at length they all know him, and praise him, from the least unto the greatest."

About this time we meet with Wesley's first notice of Sunday Schools. He preached twice at Bingley church, and says:

"Before service I stepped into the Sunday School, which contains two hundred and forty children, taught every Sunday by several masters, and superintended by the curate. So many children in one parish are restrained from open sin, and taught a little good manners, at least, as well as to read the Bible. I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?"

Wesley gave to these schools their happiest name—"Nurseries for Christians."

To Robt. Raikes belongs the credit of instituting Sunday Schools in Gloucester, but the idea was given him by a Methodist lady. In the Sunday Schools which were established in England the exercises began at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, and the children were taught reading, writing, and religion. At 3 they were taken to church, and after service were led back to school, where a part of some good book was read to them, and a psalm was sung and the school closed with prayer. The teachers were usually poor men, and were paid two shillings a Sunday for their services. Wesley and his preachers at once caught the idea of Sunday Schools, and they became one of the powers of Methodism.

A few years after this Wesley met at Bolton above five hundred Sunday School children of his societies, and preached to them a sermon in which he used no word of more than two syllables. This Bolton Sunday School became the most famous one in England, and at one time numbered 2,000 scholars.

In 1784 Wesley signed his famous "Deed of Declaration," as it is called. This was a legal instrument by which one hundred of his preachers, selected by himself, were constituted "The Conference of the People Called Methodists." The successors of these preachers are to-day the source of all authority in the Wesleyan Church, and carry on the great work of Methodist evangelization in England and in many other parts of the world.

At the Conference of 1786 Wesley gave his preachers advice as to their manner in the pulpit. They were to re-establish morning preaching in all large towns, at least, and to restore the bands and the select societies. They were always to conclude the services in about an hour. They were never to scream, nor to lean upon nor beat the Bible. Wherever they preached, to meet the

classes. Not to go home at night except in cases of the utmost necessity. Never to preach funeral sermons but for eminently holy persons, to preach none for hire, and to beware of panegyric, particularly in London; to hold more lovefeasts; to introduce no new tunes; to see that none sing too slow, and that the women sing their parts; and to exhort all to sing; and all to stand at singing, as well as to kneel at prayers. To let none repeat the last line, unless the preacher does.

This advice is from a wise man, and may well be thought on even now by Methodist preachers.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE work of Methodism in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Antigua, had grown to such an extent that there were nine preachers and over two thousand members in society. These were properly Methodist Missions; and now, under the leadership of Dr. Coke, the Mission work of Methodism began in earnest. In 1784 Dr. Coke sent to Mr. Fletcher the draft of a "Society for the Establishment of Missions Among the Heathen." The object was to send out preachers, and "to print the Scriptures for the use of any heathen country." This is said to be the first missionary report ever published, and places the Methodist Church ahead of all others in the work of modern Missions.

When Wesley was eighty-three he made another visit to Holland, and spent several weeks in preaching and visiting in that country. On returning to England he began to write the life of the saintly Fletcher. To this work, he says, "I give all the time I can spare till November from five in the morning till eight at night. These are my studying hours. I cannot write longer in a day without hurting my eyes." Think of this! A man at eighty-three studying and writing fifteen hours a day! But he was in health. "Ever since that good fever," he says, "which I had in the north of Ireland, I have had, as it were, a new constitution. All my pains and aches have forsaken me, and I am a stranger to weariness of any kind. This is the Lord's doing, and it may well be marvellous in all our eyes."

The faith of Wesley was wonderful. In the midst of

mobs, he was calm : in the midst of storms, he cast his soul and all his interests upon God. Adam Clarke relates an incident in point : Wesley, Coke, Bradford, and Clarke, were on a vessel in the English channel bound for Cornwall. The wind was fair at first, but soon came out dead ahead. Wesley was quietly reading in the cabin, but hearing the noise and bustle on deck in putting the vessel about, he asked what it meant. He was told that the wind was ahead. He quietly said, "Then let us go to prayer." They all prayed, Wesley last. He began : "Almighty and everlasting God, thou hast sway everywhere, and all things serve the purposes of thy will : Thou holdest the winds in thy hands, and sittest upon the waterfloods, and reignest a king forever : Command these winds and these waves that they obey *thee* ; and take us speedily and safely to the haven whither we would be !" The power of his petition was felt by all : He rose from his knees, made no remark, and resumed his reading. Clarke went on deck, and, to his surprise, found the vessel standing her right course, with a steady breeze, which brought them safe to Cornwall.

Wesley, as he neared the close of his life, felt and showed a deep concern for the perpetuation of Methodism in its purity. On this subject he says :

"I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist in Europe or America. But I am afraid lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline, with which they first set out."

In 1788 Charles Wesley died. His brother was away on his northern tour, and did not hear of the sad event until it was too late to reach London in time for the

funeral. At Bolton, two weeks after, as he gave out Charles' beautiful hymn, "Come, O Thou Traveller Unknown," when he came to the lines—

" My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with thee,"

overcome by his emotions, the venerable man burst into tears and sat down in the pulpit covering his face with his hands. All the people wept with him, for they knew the cause of his grief.

Perhaps few of our readers know how Wesley was induced to abandon the use of a manuscript and to preach extempore. When he was eighty-five he preached in All-hallows church, London. Wesley said to his attendant while putting on his gown :

"Sir, it is above fifty years since I first preached in this church; I remember it from a particular circumstance. I came without a sermon; and, going up the pulpit stairs, I hesitated, and returned into the vestry, under much mental confusion and agitation. A woman, who stood by, noticed my concern, and said, 'Pray, sir, what is the matter?' I replied, 'I have not brought a sermon with me.' Putting her hand on my shoulder, she said, 'Is that all? Cannot you trust God for a sermon?' This question had such an effect upon me that I ascended the pulpit, preached extempore, with great freedom to myself and acceptance to the people; and have never since taken a written sermon into the pulpit." "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!"

Wesley's remarkable life was now nearing its end. In 1790 he wrote :

"January 1.—I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot: My eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have

a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labour; I can preach and write still."

Henry Moore says :

"Being in the house with him when he wrote thus, I was greatly surprised. I knew it must be as he said; but I could not imagine his weakness was so great. He still rose at his usual hour, 4 o'clock, and went through the many duties of the day, not indeed with the same apparent vigour, but without complaint, and with a degree of resolution that was astonishing."

But the last year of his life was full of work. He still travelled and preached and wrote for the good of souls. Among his last warnings to his people, that in reference to the laying up of treasure on earth is worthy to be repeated to all generations of Christians :

"After having served you between sixty and seventy years, with dim eyes, shaking hands, and tottering feet, I give you one more advice before I sink into the dust. Mark those words of St. Paul, *Those that desire, or endeavour, to be rich, that moment fall into temptation*; yea, a deep gulf of temptation, out of which nothing less than Almighty power can deliver them. Permit me to come a little closer still : Perhaps I may not trouble you any more on this head. I am pained for you that are *rich in this world*. Do you give all you can? You who receive £500 a year, and spend only £200, do you give £300 back to God? If not, you certainly rob God of that £300. 'Nay, may I not do what I will with *my own*?' Here lies the ground of your mistake. It is not your *own*. It cannot be, unless you are Lord of heaven and earth. 'However, I must provide for my children.' Certainly. But how? By making them rich? When you will probably make them heathens, as some of you have

done already. Leave them enough to live on, not in idleness and luxury, but by honest industry. And if you have not children, upon what scriptural or rational principle can you leave a groat behind you, more than will bury you? I pray consider: What are you the better for what you leave behind you? What does it signify, whether you leave behind you ten thousand pounds or ten thousand shoes and boots? Oh, leave nothing behind you! Send all you have before you into a better world! Lend it, lend it all unto the Lord, and it shall be paid you again! Is there any danger that *his* truth should fail? It is fixed as the pillars of heaven. Haste, haste, my brethren, haste! lest you be called away before you have settled what you have on this security!"

He preached his last sermon on Wednesday, February 23, 1791, in the dining-room of a gentleman at Leatherhead, eighteen miles from London, from the words, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near."

On Friday he returned to London, and on reaching his house in City Road went up stairs and requested to be left alone for half an hour. At the end of this time Joseph Bradford went to his room and found him so sick that he sent at once for Dr. Whitehead. When the Dr. came in, Wesley said to him, "Dr., they are more afraid than hurt." The next day was passed in drowsiness and sleep. On Sunday he got up, looked cheerful, sat in his chair, and repeated the following lines from one of his brother's hymns:

"Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend!
And oh! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end!"

Pausing a few moments, he said solemnly, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." His niece, Miss Wesley, and Miss Ritchie, were in the room engaged in prayer. "When at Bristol," he said, referring to a former illness, "my words were—

‘I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me!’”

Miss Ritchie said, "Is this your language now?" "Yes," he replied, "Christ is all! He is all!" His mind then began to wander, but in his mutterings it was found that he was either preaching or leading class. The next day he was worse, and Dr. Whitehead desired to have other physicians called in. Wesley replied: "Dr. Whitehead knows my constitution better than any one. I am quite satisfied, and will have no other."

Most of the day he slept, speaking but little. When awake his attendants heard him say, in a low, distinct voice, "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus." He referred to the text, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though he was rich," &c., and said with deep solemnity, "That is the foundation, the only foundation, there is no other."

He was now fast sinking into the shades of death. On Tuesday, March 1, after passing a restless night, he was asked if he felt pain. He said, "No," and then began to sing—

“All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored!
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord.
Who, meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race,
Once more to Thy people return,
And reign in Thy kingdom of grace.

“Oh, wouldst Thou again be made known,
Again in the Spirit descend ;
And set up in each of Thy own
A kingdom that never shall end !
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey,
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to Thy sway.”

After singing he said, “I want to write.” Paper was brought and a pen placed in his fingers, but his writing was done. “I cannot,” he said. “Let me write for you,” said Miss Ritchie. “Tell me what you wish to say.” “Nothing,” he replied, “but that God is with us.” “I will get up,” he said ; and while his friends were dressing him he began to sing—

“I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath ;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers :
My days of praise shall ne’er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

“Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel’s God ; He made the sky,
And earth, and seas, with all their train ;
His truth forever stands secure,
He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor,
And none shall find His promise vain.”

Sitting in his chair, he said in a weak voice, “Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest tongues.”

Again he began to sing—

“To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree.”

His voice failed, and gasping for breath he said,—

"Now we have done. Let us all go." He was placed in bed, and soon fell into a quiet sleep. When he awoke he looked at the weeping company around him and said, "Pray and praise." They did so. He asked Mr. Bradford about his keys, and said, "I would have all things ready for my executors. Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen, and let my corpse be carried in my coffin into the chapel;" and added, as if he had now closed all earthly affairs, "Pray and praise."

John Broadbent led the weeping company in prayer, and asked God to bless still the system of doctrine and discipline which Wesley had been the means of establishing. To this petition especially the dying saint gave ■ hearty response.

On rising from prayer each person drew near the bed. Wesley took each by the hand and said: "Farewell! Farewell!" He lay still for a time, and then tried to speak. His friends bent down to hear, and they made out that he wished his sermon on "The Love of God to Fallen Man," based on the text, "Not as the offence, so also is the free gift," to be "scattered abroad and given to everybody." Wesley looked at them, and seeing that they were hardly able to understand him, gathered up his strength and "exclaimed in a tone well-nigh supernatural," "The best of all is, God is with us!" Then, after a pause, he lifted his arm as if in triumph, and again exclaimed, "The best of all is, God is with us!" He sank back exhausted. Some one moistened his lips with water. "It will not do," he said, "we must take the consequences. Never mind the poor carcass."

Two of his friends, James Rogers and Thos. Rankin, stood near the bed, but the dim eyes could not distinguish them. "Who are these?" he asked. Mr. Rogers said: "Sir, we are come to rejoice with you—going to

receive your reward." "It is the Lord's doing," said Wesley, "and it is marvellous in our eyes."

His brother's widow now came into the room, and on being told she was present he thanked her and tried to kiss her, saying: "He giveth his servants rest." She then wet his lips, and he repeated his usual thanks after meals: "We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies. Bless the Church and king, and grant us truth and peace through Jesus Christ, our Lord, forever and ever!" Then, after a little pause, he said: "The clouds drop fatness;" and after another, "The Lord of Hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge! Pray and praise!" His friends again bowed in prayer. During the night he repeated many times: "I'll praise, I'll praise." But this was all he could say. About ten o'clock next morning, Wednesday, March 2nd, Joseph Bradford led the company in prayer. "Farewell!" cried Wesley; and as Bradford was saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the heir of glory shall come in," his spirit passed through into the eternal city.

Standing around his silent form, his friends united in singing—

"Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo! the Saviour stands above;
Shows the purchase of his merit,
Reaches out the crown of love."

Wesley was buried in the small burying-ground behind City Road chapel on the 9th of March. "Such was the excitement," says Mr. Tyerman, "created by his death that within twelve hours only before the funeral took place it was determined, in order to prevent the assembling of an inconvenient crowd, that the funeral solemnities should be performed at the early hour of five A. M.

The notice to his friends was short; but hundreds attended; and to each one was given a biscuit, in an envelope, engraven with a beautifully executed portrait of the departed, dressed in canonicals, surmounted by a halo and a crown."

Thus died John Wesley, one of the most remarkable men that ever lived.

For more than sixty years he worked in the vineyard of the Lord, and the results are world-wide.

In person he was small, but active and strong. His face was bright and pleasing, and even to extreme age his complexion retained its freshness. As a scholar, he was surpassed by few; as a writer, he has given the world an illustration of what may be done by redeeming time. His style is a model for all who desire to write so as to be readily understood. No reader can fail to see what John Wesley means, no matter what subject he writes upon. "I never think" he says "of my style at all, but just set down the words that come first. Only when I transcribe anything for the press, then I think it my duty to see that every phrase be *clear, pure, proper, and easy.*"

As a preacher, he is a study. He was calm, natural, earnest, and clear. He had not the oratory of Whitefield, and yet under Wesley more people were stricken down than under Whitefield. It has been well said that Wesley's preaching "had the accuracy of a scholar, the authority of an ambassador, the unction of a saint, the power of God." It was often searching and terribly severe. He had preached once to a very fashionable audience from the words, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" One of the offended hearers said to him after the sermon,— "Sir, such a sermon would have been suitable in Billings-

gate, but it was highly improper here." To whom Wesley quietly answered, "If I had been in Billingsgate my text should have been, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" He was faithful to all classes in preaching the Word.

In social life he was cheerful, and enlivened company by his abundant and appropriate anecdotes. He was equally at home in the mansions of the rich and the hovels of the poor. For young people he had a peculiar affection. "I reverence the young," he said, "because they may be useful after I am dead."

His hands were always full of work, yet he never hurried. Once when kept waiting over-time for his carriage he said, "I have lost ten minutes forever." A friend said, "You have no need to be in a hurry." "Hurry," he answered, "I have no time to be in a hurry."

Wesley is said to have been naturally irritable, but he seemed to prefer an irritable man to one dull and slow. The following anecdote will illustrate this. He said once to one of his preachers :

"Tommy, touch that !" pointing to a dock. The itinerant did so. "Do you feel anything?" asked Wesley. "No," replied his friend. "Touch that !" continued Wesley, pointing to a nettle. His companion obeyed, and, in consequence, was stung. "Now, Tommy," remarked Wesley, "some men are like docks ; say what you will to them, they are stupid and insensible. Others are like nettles ; touch them, and they resent it. Tommy, you are a nettle ; and, for my part, I would rather have to do with a nettle than a dock."

Wesley was as close a student of men as he was of books. He was always learning.

"Pray, sir, let us go," said one of his friends, whilst two women, near Billingsgate market, were quarrelling

most furiously, and using language far more forceful than pious: "Pray, sir, let us go; I cannot stand it." "Stay, Sammy," replied Wesley, as he looked at the viragoes, who were evidently *inspired*, though not from heaven. "Stay, Sammy," answered the man who had eyes for everything; "stay, and learn how to preach!"

An eminent writer has said of him:

"A greater poet may rise than Homer or Milton; a greater theologian than Calvin; a greater philosopher than Bacon; a greater dramatist than any of ancient or modern fame; but a more distinguished revivalist of the churches than John Wesley, never."

The eminent scholar and historian, Macaulay, has recorded his estimate of Wesley in the following words:

"He was a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature; whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu; and who devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species."

But Wesley needs no eulogy from men. The fruit of his labors now growing vigorously in every part of the world is his highest meed of praise.

CHAPTER XXI⁷.

HAVING traced the path of Methodism as fully as our limits will allow from its rise to the death of Wesley, it only remains for us to close this little book by taking a rapid survey of the work it has done in the world.

It has been a little more than eighty-four years since Wesley's death, and so well did he organize Methodism for its peculiar work, and so thoroughly did he infuse into it the great principles that underlie all success in Christian labor, that to-day the number of believers who bear the Methodist name is counted by millions.

By the English and American Methodists the gospel has been carried into nearly every part of the heathen world. In India, China, Japan, Australia, and in the islands of the seas, faithful missionaries have planted the standard of the Cross and gathered around it many thousands of redeemed souls.

It is now one hundred and thirty-one years since Wesley held his first Conference, consisting of six persons; and from this small band the Wesleyans of England have grown to be a powerful Church, with more than two thousand travelling preachers, and nearly half a million of members. Of this number nearly seventy-five thousand members and nearly four hundred preachers are in the Foreign Missions of that Church.

The Sunday Schools and day schools of the Wesleyans show how fully the work of Wesley has been carried out by his sons in the gospel. They have largely over 5,000 Sunday Schools, with 111,000 officers and teachers, and

above 700,000 scholars. Of day schools they have 890, with 173,700 children under instruction. In addition to their day schools the Wesleyans have several institutions of high grade for young men, and theological schools of the best class for candidates for the ministry, both at home and in their numerous Mission fields.

In the Irish Conference there are 185 preachers, over 11,000 members, 264 Sunday Schools, more than 2,000 officers and teachers, and above 20,000 scholars.

The French Wesleyan Conference is Mission work in fact, and has been carried on under great difficulties and discouragements, but God has greatly blessed the faithful toilers. There are in France 27 travelling preachers, 96 local preachers, over 2,000 members, and nearly 3,000 Sunday School scholars.

The Australian Wesleyan Methodist Church is now a separate organization from the English Wesleyan Church. It was made so at the General Conference at Melbourne in May, 1875. It has four Annual Conferences, embracing all the work in that part of the world, with the Missions in New Zealand. This Church is governed by a General Conference which meets once in three years, and is composed of one delegate for every eight members of an Annual Conference and an equal number of lay delegates. There are 362 travelling preachers and 67,900 members. Two superior Colleges are under the control of this Church.

Besides these there are other Methodist Churches in England which have arisen out of schisms from the Parent Church, but they hold to the doctrines and forms of Methodism and are doing the work of God with earnestness and success. These are, the Methodist New Connection Church, the United Methodist Free Church, the Bible Christian Church, and the Wesleyan Reform Union.

In these bodies the aggregate number of preachers is over 6,600; in this the large number of over 5,000 local preachers in the Methodist Free Churches and the Bible Christian Church is included. The membership of all is above 135,000, while they have more than 300,000 children in their Sunday Schools.

In Canada there are now two Methodist bodies. The Methodist Church of Canada, formed in 1874 by the union of the Wesleyan and New Connection Conferences of Canada and the Wesleyan Conferences of Eastern British America. There are six Annual Conferences in this Church, each having a President.

In none of the Methodist Churches we have named is there such an officer as a Bishop. Their chief ecclesiastical officer is called President, and in the Wesleyan Parent Church, and we believe in all the branches, he holds office only for one year.

The Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada is episcopal in its form of government. It has over 400 ministers, travelling and local, with 23,000 members, and above 17,000 Sunday School scholars.

The great field in which Methodism has won its noblest victories and achieved its grandest work is the United States

From the organization of the first society in the city of New York in 1766 to the present time just one hundred and ten years have elapsed. Looking back over this period, we may exclaim, "Behold, what hath God wrought!"

The band of five persons gathered by Philip Embury, ■ local preacher, has, in little more than ■ hundred years, swelled into a Methodist membership, counting all that bear the name, of 3,173,229. The first Conference was held in Philadelphia in June, 1773, and was composed



John Street Church, New York,

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of ten preachers, and now there are in the United States above 40,000 travelling and local Methodist preachers. In the Sunday Schools under the control of Methodists there are nearly 2,500,000 children, which is nearly half of the whole number of scholars in the United States, as reported at the recent International Convention held in the city of Baltimore.

The value of property held by the Methodists reaches nearly \$70,000,000, and the number of church-sittings to 6,528,209.

In the work of education Methodism has a noble record. In this country alone there are more than a hundred institutions of learning under the control of Methodist Churches, all of which have been established within a period of fifty years. The circulation of religious literature has always been a cherished work of Methodism. In the plans of John Wesley it held a chief place. By preaching on the itinerant plan and the circulation of good books he accomplished the greatest reformation in morals and manners that has been seen since the Apostolic age. His successors in this country and in England have faithfully followed in his steps. From the Publishing Houses established by every branch of Methodism publications of all classes, from the smallest tracts to the largest and costliest commentaries, have been sent forth by millions of copies. In weekly papers, which is one of the best and readiest channels for conveying information to the people, no Churches in the world are ahead of the Methodists. The combined circulation of such papers in this country is not less than five hundred thousand; and if we allow five readers to each paper we have 2,500,000 of our population brought every week under the influence of Methodist teaching in one of its most potent forms. Besides these, in Review and Maga-

zine literature the Methodist publications are equal to those of any other denomination.

By careful statistical reports it appears that in England the proportion of Methodists is one to every thirty of the population, and one-fifth part of all the children in England of school-going age receive instructions in Methodist Sunday Schools. In this country the proportion of Methodists to the whole population is one in every fifteen.

From all this it is apparent that Dr. Abel Stevens was right when, in his *History of Methodism*, he styled it "The religious movement of the eighteenth century." But in fact there is nothing really new in Methodism. As a recent eminent writer well says: "Spiritual religion is certainly not a gift or experience of modern times, and even the peculiar religious phenomena that distinguish this body are as old as Christianity; its fullness of spiritual power, rendering it specifically intense, demonstrative, and fruitful of good works, alone distinguish it." May this "fullness of spiritual power" rest upon Methodism in all its branches throughout the world to the end of time.

We must not omit to notice, as fully as our plan will allow, the Mission work of Methodism. John Wesley was a life-long missionary, and he infused into the whole body of preachers his own burning zeal for the spread of the gospel among all people. "The world is my parish," was his noble reply, when urged to confine his labors to one particular charge. His most resolute helper, Thomas Coke, as we have already stated, conceived in 1784 the idea of a "Society for the Establishment of Missions Among the Heathen." This noble man, after crossing the Atlantic Ocean eighteen times in the prosecution of the work in North America and the West In-

dies, came before the British Conference of 1813 with a proposition to establish a Mission in the East Indies.

The Conference hesitated for want of money, and he generously offered to advance from his private means \$16,000 in aid of the enterprise. His offer was accepted, and he sailed with six faithful men, who were appointed to share his toils and dangers. On the 2nd day of May, 1814, in the midst of the Indian Ocean, Dr. Coke died suddenly at night in his state-room, and, on the following day, after the most solemn services, the body was committed to the deep. In gloom and sorrow, but in hope and faith, his companions reached their destination and began the work which has steadily increased until the present day.

The important work thus started by Doctor Coke was carried forward with zeal by his English brethren. In this same year the Wesleyan mission-work in South Africa was begun; in Australia, in 1815; in Western Africa, in 1817; in New Zealand, in 1822; and in the Friendly Islands, in 1826. In all of these countries the success of the gospel has been wonderful, in the face of the greatest obstacles; and thousands of the wildest and most barbarous tribes have been Christianized by the heroic men and women who have braved every danger and endured all manner of hardship and suffering to lead them to the light of life.

The English Wesleyans have in their mission-fields more than a thousand ordained ministers, above 160,000 members, and 265,000 children under instruction in their mission schools. The annual income of their Missionary Society reached the past year the sum of \$900,000. The smaller Methodist bodies in England are also actively engaged in this work; and their reports show above

twenty thousand members and two hundred and fifty missionaries in the various fields.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has a noble missionary record. Missions have been established with marked success in Africa, Asia, Europe, Japan, and Mexico. The total number of American missionaries in the various foreign fields is 103; assistant missionaries, 559; members, 18,775; probationers, 8,282. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, of that Church, sustains twenty-eight missionaries, who labor in Africa, South America, China, India, Bulgaria, Japan, and Mexico. In the Territories, and among the foreign population of this country, very efficient missions are maintained. The whole missionary force of that Church is as follows: Foreign missionaries and assistants, 690; native preachers, 281; in the Territories and among foreign populations, 312; domestic missionaries, 2,378. The whole membership in foreign missions and among our foreign population is set down in the latest returns at 35,803. This does not include the very large number of Germans in the M. E. Church in this country, of whom a large proportion is embraced in regular German Conferences.

The M. E. Church, South, has missions in China, Brazil, Mexico, among the Indians of the Indian Territory, and the Germans chiefly of the States of Louisiana and Texas. Before the late war this Church labored with pre-eminent success among the blacks of the Southern States, and many of her ablest ministers toiled for years among the slaves on the vast cotton and rice plantations; but, crippled in all her resources by that tremendous struggle, she has been chiefly engaged, since its close, in the work of reorganization and in repairing and refitting church buildings. Now we may hope she will earnestly seek to enter the doors which stand open in every part

of the world, and make a missionary record worthy to stand with those of her sister Churches in this country and in England.

The missionary spirit animates all the minor Methodist bodies in the United States and Canada; and, in their measure, they are actively engaged in sending the gospel to those who sit in darkness.

By a faithful adherence to her doctrines and to the example of her great founder, Methodism may continue to the end of time to bless the world as one of the purest forms of "Christianity in earnest."

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